

**THE DYSFUNCTIONAL FAITH OF OUR FATHERS: CO-DEPENDENCY AND
PATRIARCHY IN THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

**A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Martha Anne Aitchison Siegel
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Martha Anne Aitchison Siegel,

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Karen J. Torjesen
[Signature]

May 7, 1993

Date

all J. Moore

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Abstract

The Dysfunctional Faith of Our Fathers: Co-dependency and Patriarchy in the Western Christian Tradition

Martha Anne Aitchison Siegel

A review of selected authors identifies the role of the patriarchal Western Christian church in the contemporary problem of co-dependency, especially as it affects women, with particular attention to the Anglican tradition.

The church has been an important vehicle in the transmission and perpetuation of the patriarchal world-view in Western society, playing a key role in shaping traditional beliefs about the role of women and socializing them into the pattern of attitudes and behavior now associated with co-dependency. The church's promotion of a hierarchical model of dominant / submissive relationships; teachings about the natural inferiority and subservient status of women; preoccupation with control; exercise of power through coercion and violence; suspicion of sexuality and emotion; and glorification of unquestioning obedience, self negation, sacrificial service, and suffering have contributed to the pain and dysfunctional relationships to self, others, and God now identified as co-dependency.

The contemporary recognition of co-dependency as a problem may be part of a larger paradigm shift, one sign that the traditional patriarchal world-view may no longer be congruent with social realities and cultural values of late twentieth century America where old hierarchal values are being questioned, traditional views of women are being redefined as oppressive sexism, and the pain and dysfunction of co-dependence are being recognized and dealt with by increasing numbers of women and men. The church has begun to respond to some of these issues. It has yet to deal with the widespread implications of its patriarchal nature.

If the church is to be responsive to many contemporary problems, including pervasive dysfunctional co-dependence in individuals, families, and in its own organizational life, it will need to acknowledge the roots of the problem deep in its own patriarchal tradition, and then act responsibly to identify non-oppressive elements of the

Christian tradition and use these as a framework for basic changes in the life and structure of the church. One example of this approach, using insights from feminist theory and the co-dependency recovery movement to suggest new approaches to spirituality for Christian women, is included.

Acknowledgments

So many people have contributed their ideas and encouragement to this project. I especially wish to thank Karen Torjesen, Jon Olson, and M. R. Ritley for their inspiration and counsel, Elaine Walker for her assistance in preparation of the manuscript, and my husband Barry for his unfailing support and patience. And I want to acknowledge the very important contributions of all those children, women, and men who have shared their stories and their journeys with me. I am most grateful to all of you.

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Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword:
O how our hearts beat high with joy,
Whene'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
And truly blest would be our fate,
If we, like them, should die for thee.
Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.'

¹ F. W. Farber, #393, The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1940).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem

The problem addressed by this project is co-dependency--the pain and damage to human personality and dysfunctional relationships to self, others, and God and the extent to which it has been caused by patriarchal beliefs, values, and institutions that have been legitimized, transmitted, and perpetuated by the Western Christian church.

Importance of the Problem

In late twentieth century America two emerging social movements are challenging traditional Christian beliefs and attitudes. Although on the surface they appear very different, the problems defined by both feminism and the co-dependence/recovery movement question traditional assumptions and offer alternative ways of looking at nature of God, humans, and society. The growth of both these movements suggests that the issues they raise have struck a deep chord in the American consciousness.

As the feminist movement has called attention to the oppressive nature of the patriarchal belief structure that underlies much of Western civilization, women have begun to question and react against the pervasive sexism of contemporary social, economic, and political institutions, including the Christian church. Feminist scholars have critiqued the androcentric biases of biblical literature and traditional Christian theology, analyzing the patriarchal nature of the symbolic system and organizational structure of the church and exploring alternative views of God and the relationship of God and humans inside and outside the institutional Church. The emergence of feminist liberation theology and feminist biblical scholarship is paralleled by a growing sense of dissatisfaction among Christian women who sense that much of traditional Christianity does not reflect their experience or respond to their needs.

At the same time the recovery/co-dependence movement has grown from its beginnings in the alcoholism treatment field into a major social phenomenon characterized by the growth of Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) and similar self-help groups,

burgeoning media attention, and increasing interest in the mental health professions. As this movement grows, increasing numbers of people, including Christians, are finding the major or sole encouragement for their healing and spiritual growth in the recovery movement. This may be due in part to the failure of the traditional church to speak to contemporary experience, especially the experience of women. Something about the concept of co-dependence and the process of recovery seems to be connecting with people's lives and spirituality in a way that the contemporary church is not.

Over the past several years in my dual roles as an Episcopal priest and a nurse educator/psychotherapist I have become increasingly aware of the growing importance of these movements and the significance of their insights especially as they affect the psychological and spiritual growth of women. And I have become intrigued with the ways they relate to one another, often discussing similar phenomena using different vocabularies based in different conceptual frameworks but reaching similar and complementary conclusions. Both viewpoints will be used to critique traditional patriarchal Christianity and suggest ways of making the church more responsive to the needs and concerns of contemporary Christians, especially women who have often felt alienated and wounded by church dogma and practice. This exploration of the relationship between the Christian church, patriarchy, and co-dependence begins with a discussion of co-dependence and its effects on individuals and society.

Co-dependence

Description

The term co-dependence is new and the professional literature has just begun the task of defining and describing the concept of co-dependence with any degree of precision. While as yet there is not one generally accepted definition of the term co-dependence, there seem to be enough commonalities to permit the development of working definitions.

One group of professionals has defined co-dependence as, "A pattern of painful dependency on compulsive behaviors and on approval from others in an attempt to find safety, self worth and identity. Recovery is possible."¹ Other definitions include:

¹ U. S. Journal pre-conference forum (1989) quoted in Charles L. Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition (Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications, 1991), 10.

An emotional, psychological, and behavioral pattern of coping that develops as a result of an individual's prolonged exposure to, and practice of, a set of oppressive rules--rules which prevent the open expression of feeling, as well as the direct discussion of personal and interpersonal problems.²

A disease induced by child abuse, that leads to self-defeating relationships with the self and others.³

A learned behavior, expressed by dependencies on people and things outside the self; these dependencies include neglecting and diminishing of one's own identity. The false self that emerges is often expressed through compulsive habits, addictions, and other disorders that further increase alienation from the person's true identity, fostering a sense of shame.⁴

An addiction to another person or persons and their problems or to a relationship and its problems.⁵

The absence of relationship with self, a child's reaction to dysfunctional family.⁶

The concept of co-dependence was first applied to families of alcoholics. Once named, the concept seems to have gained power and its use has been extended--first to include other substance abuse, next other addictive/ compulsive disorders, and then all dysfunctional families. Finally, the focus on families and primary relationships has expanded to include organizations, communities, social systems, and Western society itself. Some authors believe that American culture, through its institutions, trains people to be co-dependent, and include the church among these institutions.⁷

What does co-dependence look like? This is not an easy question to answer with

² Robert Subby (1984) quoted in Charles L. Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 9.

³ Candace Snow and David Willard, I'm Dying to Take Care of You (Redmond, Wash.: Professional Counselor Books, 1989), 15.

⁴ National Council on Co-dependence (1990) quoted in Charles L. Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 10.

⁵ Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse quoted in Anne Wilson Schaefer, When Society Becomes an Addict (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 29.

⁶ Terry Kellogg, Broken Toys Broken Dreams (Amherst, Mass: BRAT, 1990), xix.

⁷ See Dana G. Finnegan and Emily B. McNally, "The Lonely Journey: Lesbians and Gay Men Who Are Co-dependent," Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1989): 121-23; Anne Wilson Schaefer, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood--Mistreated (1986; reprint, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), 50, 71-90; Schaefer, When Society Becomes an Addict; Charles L. Whitfield, "Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction--Some Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Perspectives," Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1989): 20-22; and Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition.

precision, given the present state of knowledge. Co-dependence theory is still in the developmental stages and, to date, research has been minimal. Descriptions tend to be based on clinical experience and vary among authors. However, it is possible to identify certain common threads running through the descriptions.⁸

Co-dependence seems to involve core issues of self-identity, relationships, and control. There is a characteristic poor sense of personal identity and a lack of clear boundaries, with the reference point for thoughts, feelings and values--the locus of control--outside the self. Co-dependent persons are dependent on others for their view of themselves and the world, and for their sense of self worth. They are people-pleasers who use impression management to present themselves as they would like to be seen by others.

Because co-dependents need to feel connected with others and fear rejection, they may become preoccupied with relationships. They often deny themselves and become overly responsible caretakers--becoming enmeshed with others and focusing on meeting the needs of others to the exclusion of their own. Their need to maintain relationships is so great that they tend to minimize problems and deny reality. Because co-dependence tends to be characterized by extremes of behavior they may isolate themselves from others, or move back and forth between needy dependency and exaggerated independence and self-sufficiency.

All this is closely connected with the need to control--the attempt to achieve self-worth through controlling the feelings and behavior of themselves and others. Attempts at self-control can lead to rigidity, perfectionism, and lack of spontaneity. Feelings are

⁸ The following discussion is based on a content analysis of the following sources: Melanie Beattie, Codependent No More (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 37-45; Roman C. Bogdaniak and Fred P. Piercy, "Therapeutic Issues of Adolescent Children of Alcoholics (AdCA) Groups," International Journal of Group Psychotherapy 37 (October 1987): 573-79; Timmen L. Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 18, no. 1 (January-March 1986): 15-19; Finnegan and McNally; Kellogg; Warner Mendenhall, "Co-dependency Definitions and Dynamics," Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1989): 3-17; Ronald T. Potter-Efron and Patricia S. Potter-Efron, "Assessment of Co-dependency with Individuals from Alcoholic and Chemically Dependent Families," Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1989): 39-53; Anne Wilson Schaeff, "Is the Church an Addictive Organization?" Christian Century 107, no. 1 (January 1990): 18; Schaeff, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated, and When Society Becomes an Addict, 30-32, 37-129; Sondra Smalley, "Dependency Issues in Lesbian Relationships," Journal of Homosexuality 14, nos. 1-2 (1987): 126-27; Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 25-107; and Whitfield, "Codependence: Our Most Common Addiction," 29-31.

repressed. Obsessions and compulsions, including addictions of all kinds, may be used in an attempt to fill inner emptiness or as a way of “numbing out” to avoid facing the underlying painful feelings. Because of the fear of alienating others through direct confrontation, attempts to control are likely to be indirect: passive-aggressive behavior, impression management, manipulation, guilt, threats, helplessness, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom.

Because the ability to control others is an illusion, the co-dependent’s efforts are doomed to failure, and, rather than enhancing self-esteem, lead to more feelings of guilt, shame, inadequacy, self-hatred, anger, powerlessness, and despair--thus continuing the vicious cycle. Throughout this process, the greatest fears are of separation, abandonment, and loss of control.

Co-dependence has been viewed variously as a primary condition, an addiction, a chronic progressive illness, a reaction to stress, or an expected part of human life--“a normal reaction to abnormal people.”⁹ Despite these differences in emphasis, there is general agreement that co-dependence is a reactive process, a learned pattern of beliefs and behavior with intrapsychic, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions.¹⁰ Melanie Beattie notes that this process can be “triggered through relationships, personally or professionally, with troubled, needy, or dependent people” and is progressive--the stress generated in these relationships leads to behaviors that become habits and eventually take on a life of their own.¹¹

Process

Often the process begins as children grow up in alcoholic or other dysfunctional families characterized by unstable parental roles, parental undependability, environmental chaos, isolation, and emotional unavailability.¹² Children learn to adjust to this

⁹ Beattie, *Codependent No More*, 32-33.

¹⁰ See Smalley, 27; Cermak, 19; and Frederick A. Prezioso, “Spirituality in the Recovery Process,” *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 4 (1987): 233-34.

¹¹ Beattie, *Codependent No More*, 31-33.

¹² Tarpley M. Richards, “Recovery for Adult Children of Alcoholics: Education, Support, Psychotherapy,” *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1989): 92.

environment and develop maladaptive, co-dependent behaviors in order to survive.¹³

These families tend to develop survival strategies, becoming linked together by a system of shared dependency and developing a pattern of unspoken but powerful and pervasive rules that become a model for relationships.¹⁴ These rules have been summarized as, “Don’t talk, don’t trust, don’t feel.”¹⁵

Family members learn not to talk about real problems and issues. Open, direct, honest communication is discouraged. Family secrets are protected. Reality is denied. Children learn not to trust in other people or themselves. Without validation from others they cannot learn to trust their own perceptions, feelings, and values, and when care giving is indifferent, inconsistent, or violent they cannot count on having their needs met.

Children need consistency to gain a sense of mastery over the environment. Without this there is no sense of control—over the chaotic environment or over their own thoughts and feelings. Children attempt to control this dangerous internal and external situation by learning to control themselves and others through rigidity, coercion, or manipulation. They repress their inner life—deny reality, repress feelings, numb the pain.¹⁶

In this family environment children face abuse—needs are not met, reality and feelings are not acknowledged, overt physical or sexual abuse is often present. Yet the children cannot express their fear and pain or their own perceptions of reality. Survival demands that these must be denied and repressed—they are not allowed to “know what they know.”¹⁷ Mendenhall notes that children are “required to be good and forget the cruelty . . . they must comply . . . but underneath . . . is deep humiliation, intimidation, destruction of dignity, loss of power and torment.”¹⁸ This repression of self-awareness

¹³ Warner Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Treatment,” *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1989): 76.

¹⁴ Beattie, *Codependent No More*, 31; and Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Treatment,” 77; and “Co-dependency Definitions,” 5.

¹⁵ Claudia Black, “*It Will Never Happen to Me!*” (New York: Ballantine, 1981), 43-44.

¹⁶ See Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Treatment,” 77-79; and Whitfield, “Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction,” 24.

¹⁷ Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Definitions and Dynamics,” 7.

¹⁸ Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Definitions and Dynamics,” 7.

leads to profound destruction of the self.¹⁹ The message becomes, “it is unsafe to be you.”²⁰

As this process continues, there is a progressive loss of touch with internal processes--feelings, perceptions, the true self--and the focus of attention moves outside the self. Boundaries between the self and others blur. The feelings, perceptions, ideas and values of others are accepted as one's own. Self esteem comes increasingly from the love and approval of others.²¹ Meaning, purpose and a sense of value to life are derived from relationships and from the co-dependent life style itself.²²

As the true self is repressed and denied to please parental figures, a false, co-dependent self emerges to take its place. “I am who you want me to be.”²³ This denial of the true self for the sake of relationship with others is the basis of the addictive process in co-dependence--as the true self is denied for the sake of feeling connected to others, others become necessary for the survival of the only self that is known, the false self. Charles Whitfield identifies this process as the core of co-dependence and the common basis for all other addictions and compulsions, which are run by “a sense of shame that our true self is somehow defective or inadequate . . . the erroneous notion that something outside ourself can make us happy and fulfilled.”²⁴

This process blocks the emotional, mental and spiritual growth and development of

¹⁹ “Self,” or “true self” is not specifically defined in the literature. Whitfield, in Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, uses the terms “True Self/Child Within” and cites a number of synonyms found in the literature including: “adaptive wounded child, broken child, free child, magical child, child ego state, adult ego state, toddler child (and other developmental stages), vulnerable child, precious child, and ‘little professor,’ etc.” (p. 20).

²⁰ Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Definitions and Dynamics,” 8.

²¹ See Finnegan and McNally, 122; and Whitfield, “Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction,” 21-23.

²² Prezioso, 234

²³ Finnegan and McNally, 122.

²⁴ Whitfield, “Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction,” 23. Alice Miller has described this process in detail in her foundational works, The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self, trans. Ruth Ward (1981; reprint, New York: Basic Books, 1990); For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence, 3rd ed., trans. Hildegard Hannum and Hunter Hannum (1983; reprint, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, Noonday, 1990); and Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child, trans. Hildegard Hannum and Hunter Hannum (1984; reprint, New York: Meridian, 1986).

the individual and results in enormous suffering. Losses not grieved in a healthy way are acted out, resulting in physical, mental or behavioral problems. Unexpressed anger, guilt, and shame leads to depression, addictions, compulsions, abuse, and stress related illness.²⁵

Co-dependence is an intergenerational process. The dynamics of the dysfunctional family “must be normalized to maintain the myth of family” and “victims will act in the same way toward their children to prove that their parents behaved correctly to them.”²⁶ Once the irrational family rules and beliefs have developed in response to an addictive situation, they tend to persist across generations, even when substance abuse is not present.²⁷

Co-dependency and Culture

Some authors suggest that the process of co-dependence permeates the entire culture, affecting all primary systems--the personal system of individuals, family, institutions, and society at large. They see co-dependent traits as widespread and pervasive.²⁸ Anne Wilson Schaef comments on the high levels of co-dependence in American society and quotes Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse's estimate that as many as 96 percent of the population live or lived in families and situations that can lead to co-dependence.²⁹ Whitfield sees our current world as a place “where nearly everyone is co-dependent most of the time” and notes that co-dependence is “endemic in ordinary humankind,” mimicking, accompanying, aggravating and leading to many common physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual problems. He describes co-dependence as a contagious or acquired illness learned from others around us. “From the time we are born it is modeled and taught to us by a seemingly endless string of important people in our life: parents, teachers, siblings, friends, heroes, heroines . . . reinforced by

²⁵ See Beattie, Codependent No More, 31; Black, 43-44; Jean Caldwell, “Preparing a Family for Intervention,” Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 18, no. 1 (January-March 1986): 57.

²⁶ Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Definitions and Dynamics,” 7-8.

²⁷ Mendenhall, “Co-dependency Treatment,” 75.

²⁸ See Finnegan and McNally, 12; Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict; and Whitfield, “Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction,” 20-22.

²⁹ Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict, 15.

the media, government, organized religion, and the helping professions.”³⁰ Schaefer specifically relates this to the patriarchal world view of Western culture.³¹

Both men and women can develop co-dependence when involved in dysfunctional families or other problematic relationships. However, women seem especially vulnerable to the co-dependent process because of traditional cultural views on the role and nature of women that are rooted in the patriarchal world view and the dynamics of the Western patriarchal family.

In such a system where men are the dominant, normative group, women are seen as naturally inferior and less than fully human. Women’s nature is described as passive, dependent, submissive, self-sacrificing; their predominant functions are reproduction and care-giving; and their social roles are limited to wife and mother within the private, domestic world of home and family. Their identity and social status is based on their relationship to males--fathers, husbands, brothers, sons. Thus women are predisposed to problems with identity, self-esteem, care-taking, and dependence on relationships for power, meaning and self-worth.³²

Present day Western patriarchy is rooted in the beliefs and values of the ancient Mediterranean world, legitimized and perpetuated by the Christian church, which used a gender hierarchy model for its own institutions and made androcentric views of women and patriarchal family structure the norm for Christian society, where it has remained, largely unquestioned by Christian and secular thought, until the present day. In fact, the persistence of patriarchal institutions and values may be one of the major factors predisposing contemporary society to co-dependence.

Thus an adequate response to co-dependency involves an understanding of its roots in the patriarchal world view. An assessment of the role of the Christian church is important in this because of the pervasive influence of Christianity on the beliefs and values of Western society. The effect of Christian thought continues to be important in modern

³⁰ Whitfield, “Co-dependence: Our Most Common Addiction,” 22.

³¹ See Anne Wilson Schaefer, Women’s Reality (San Francisco: Harper and Row), 1985; and When Society Becomes an Addict.

³² Schaefer, Women’s Reality.

secular culture where traditional values provide the basis for contemporary Western views of family and society.

In addition, an understanding of the relationship between patriarchy and Christianity is important to the Christian community if the church is to minister effectively to women and to other hurting individuals and families, and to address deep seated problems in its own institutions. Interventions will only be cosmetic unless root causes are understood and addressed in specific ways. Perhaps most importantly, the church needs to examine and resolve the basic conflict between its proclamation of a gospel of love and justice and its role in the perpetuation of oppressive, unjust patriarchal beliefs, values, and institutional structures.

Thesis

To begin to address the problem of co-dependency effectively, the Christian community must first understand the history and dynamics of the pervasive relationship between co-dependency, patriarchy and Christianity, and then make specific interventions in ecclesiology, theology, worship, ethics, spirituality, education, and pastoral care to break these ties and provide alternative viewpoints and experiences.

Definitions of Major Terms

Addiction: Any process that dulls the emotions and over which an individual, group, or institution is powerless. Addictions include: (1) mood altering substances (such as alcohol, drugs, nicotine, caffeine, and food); and/or (2) processes (specific series of actions or interactions which can include almost any human activity such as accumulating money, gambling, sex, work, religion, worry, relationships).³³

Anglican: That part of the Christian church that is in communion with the see of Canterbury, including the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

Church: Unless otherwise indicated is used in a generic sense to refer to mainstream Western Catholic and Protestant Christianity.

Dysfunctional family: A family that is unable "to successfully execute activities essential to meeting family and individual needs and satisfying societal demands and

³³ Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict, 20-24.

expectations. These activities include: (1) gathering information; (2) making and implementing decisions; (3) resolving conflict and providing for individual growth and development; (4) creating an emotional atmosphere conducive to self-disclosure, trust, cooperation, and acceptance; and (5) engaging in productive and adaptive activities with regard to internal family needs and external societal demands."³⁴

Ethos: The characteristic and distinguishing attitudes, habits, beliefs, etc. of an individual or group.³⁵

Feminist liberation theology: "A theological movement that has developed during the last two decades among women in Euroamerican cultures who understand feminism to be a shared commitment to the well-being of women of all classes, cultures, religions, colors, racial/ethnic heritages, ages, and sexual preferences; and to justice for poor men, men of color, gaymen [*sic*] and other men who suffer oppression."³⁶

Hierarchy: "Any system of persons or things ranked one above the other,"³⁷ as in gender hierarchy where persons are ranked according to sex.

Patriarchy: A "form of social organization in which the father is the supreme authority in the family . . . and a society, community, or country based on this social organization."³⁸ This system in which men are dominant and women are subordinate is linked to other forms of dominance and submission such as slavery, classism, and racism.³⁹

Recovery: "The process of learning how to break addictive behavior patterns and live with feelings non-addictively."⁴⁰ The recovery movement involves all those things--people, programs, authors, etc.--involved in this process. In this discussion it is used synonymously with co-dependence movement to refer to all those things related to healing of co-dependence and related issues.

Self: Or true self refers to a sense of integrity or wholeness, a conscious awareness

³⁴ Rae Sedgwick, Family Mental Health Theory and Practice (St. Louis: Mosby, 1981), 6.

³⁵ "Ethos," Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd college ed.

³⁶ Carter Heyward, Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality, and Liberation (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1984), 187-88.

³⁷ "Hierarchy," Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1st unabridged ed.

³⁸ "Patriarchy," Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1st unabridged ed.

³⁹ Heyward, Our Passion, 223-26.

⁴⁰ Cathryn L. Taylor, The Inner Child Workbook (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1991), 244.

and connection with internal processes (feelings, perceptions, memories, etc.) and values, as differentiated from roles (the conscious assumption of different ways of behaving in different situations), and false self (the unconscious assumption of a facade in order to please or placate others).

Self-concept: "The total psychological picture one holds of oneself; an image or representation of all the attributes and qualities a person believes [themselves] to have."⁴¹ Used interchangeably with self image, "the totality of the qualities and traits a person holds in a mental picture of [themselves]."⁴²

Self-esteem: "The totality of one's evaluation of oneself."⁴³

Spirituality: "Those attitudes, beliefs and practices which animate people's lives and help them to reach out towards super-sensible realities."⁴⁴

Work Previously Done in the Field

Individual areas related to this problem--co-dependency; history of Christian doctrine as it relates to power relationships, women and family; feminist critiques of patriarchy; and new directions in theology and praxis--are addressed in a number of diverse disciplines including psychology and medicine, church history, biblical studies, theology, women's studies, and spirituality. The material relevant to this project is often incidental to the major thrust of an author and so must be identified, excerpted, analyzed, and woven together into a coherent whole. This has necessitated the review of a large body of disparate literature.

Because many of the most comprehensive and useful discussions of co-dependence are found in self-help books addressed to the recovery community, the exploration of co-dependency included review of both popular and professional sources. Melanie Beattie, Claudia Black, Terry Kellogg, and John Bradshaw are among the many authors writing for the general public who describe co-dependency and offer suggestions

⁴¹ William E. Fann and Charles E. Goshen, The Language of Mental Health, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Mosby, 1977), 68.

⁴² Fann and Goshen, 68.

⁴³ Fann and Goshen, 68.

⁴⁴ Gordon S. Wakefield, "Spirituality," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, eds. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 549.

for treatment. Charles Whitfield has written for both the popular and professional audience. His Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, addressed to both groups, is perhaps the most comprehensive book now available on the subject.⁴⁵

Although co-dependence is beginning to be addressed in professional textbooks, discussion in the medical and psychological literature continues to be limited and tends to be concentrated in journals related to the field of addiction. Discussions are largely based on clinical observations and as yet there has been little empirical research. Timmen Cermak and Ronald and Patricia Potter-Effron discuss specific diagnostic tools for the use of mental health professionals and researchers. Whitfield and Warner Mendenhall provide useful insights into the dynamics of co-dependency and its effects on individuals, families and institutions, while Mendenhall and Tarpley Richards offer suggestions for treatment.

Anne Wilson Schaef has combined discussion of co-dependency with critique of the social system. Writing primarily for the popular market, she examines the effects of the patriarchal world view on contemporary American society, describing its effects on women, exploring the relationship between patriarchy and addictive behavior, including co-dependency, and discussing problems of addictive institutions, including the Christian church. She has specifically linked co-dependency with patriarchy in her analysis of contemporary society. This project seeks to build on her insights by focusing on Christianity, exploring historical antecedents and suggesting strategies for change.

Although they did not discuss co-dependency as such, several sources are especially important in understanding the historical, cultural, and theological roots of co-dependency. M. R. Ritley's lectures on psychohistory provide a framework for understanding the relationship between a culture—its world view, survival needs, and sense of the sacred—and paradigm shift.⁴⁶ Bruce Malina's description of patriarchal first-century Mediterranean culture suggests a link between the characteristics of this culture and values and behaviors now labeled as co-dependent.⁴⁷ The comprehensive discussions of Augustine and Aquinas' concept of women in Kari Elisabeth Børresen and Prudence Allen

⁴⁵ See the bibliography for works by these authors.

⁴⁶ M. R. Ritley, Psycho-History (Los Angeles: Ritley, 1989), cassette.

⁴⁷ Bruce J. Malina, The New Testament World (Louisville: John Knox, 1981).

include factors that can be related to co-dependency.⁴⁸ While the Anglican literature directly related to women focuses on questions of ordination, a variety of sources provided insights into the relationship between Anglican thought and co-dependency.

Feminist literature includes numerous discussions of the effect of patriarchy on women. Rosemary Ruether and other feminist authors have examined the relationship between Christianity, patriarchy and violence against women.⁴⁹ Judith Plaskow and Rita Nakashima Brock see sin in ways related to co-dependency, with Plaskow discussing the sin of women as the refusal to take responsibility for the self and Brock viewing sin as damage suffered in a patriarchal family setting.⁵⁰ Heyward, Ruether, Brock, and other feminist liberation theologians critique patriarchal theologies and suggest new ways of imaging God and relating to the divine, the self, other humans, and the universe. Many of them discuss issues of self-concept, relationship, and power as they relate to patriarchy and women. While many of these factors are related to co-dependency, no one has explored the specific relationship between co-dependency and patriarchy.

This project seeks to pull together concepts from this diverse literature, focusing on the historical roots of the relationship between patriarchy and co-dependence within Western Christianity and suggesting strategies for change.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

The author recognizes the widespread impact of co-dependency, but concentrates in this project on the relationship between co-dependency and patriarchy in Western Christianity, with an emphasis on the Anglican tradition. Although co-dependence can affect both men and women, the focus of this discussion is on women. The definition of problems and suggestions for change are directed to the contemporary American Christian

⁴⁸ See Kari Elisabeth Børresen, Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Women in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, trans. Charles H. Talbot (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981); and Prudence Allen, The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 1750 B. C. - A. D. 1250 (Montreal: Eden, 1985).

⁴⁹ Rosemary Ruether, "The Western Religious Tradition and Violence in the Home," Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse, eds. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 31-32.

⁵⁰ Judith Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980); and Rita Nakashima Brock, Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power (New York: Crossroad, 1988).

church, especially American Anglicanism.

The discussion of strategies for change refers briefly to long range objectives, but concentrates on interventions that can be implemented in the interim while these long range goals are being realized, including a detailed discussion of one selected area, women's spirituality. Comprehensive discussion of biblical studies, organizational structures, and theological systems--old and new--are beyond the scope of this paper, as are discussions of basic changes in these complex areas.

Procedure for Integration

The description and discussion of the problem are based on analysis and synthesis of specific concepts from psychology, church history, traditional and feminist theology, and spirituality. Feminist and co-dependency theory are used in a process of construction and deconstruction to critique traditional Christianity and suggest new approaches to contemporary theological and pastoral concerns.

In a methodology similar to that used by Alice Miller to identify damaging child rearing practices through an historical review of literature in the field, this project reviews traditional Christian literature in an attempt to identify problematic areas related to co-dependency. Suggestions for change draw on certain aspects of the Anglican ethos as well as the insights of feminist theology and the co-dependency recovery movement. Throughout, the discussion, based on the assumption that Christianity contains both potentially oppressive and potentially liberating factors, uses a hermeneutic of suspicion to separate those elements that promote health and wholeness from those that lead to pain and dysfunction.

The primary methodology has been library research supplemented by personal observations in pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, and recovery situations. Historical research has included review of primary and secondary sources. Key writers and other sources were selected for examination based on their importance to Christian thought.

Recognizing the difficulties inherent in cross cultural comparisons, this analysis is not intended as a critique of earlier social systems, but rather of traditional Western Christianity which, according to feminist theory, has failed to differentiate between

essential doctrine and culturally dependent beliefs and values. The church incorporated the cultural values of the society in which it originated into its own belief system and organizational structure and has continued to advocate that world view despite the vast social and economic changes of the last two millennia. Traditional Christianity continues to embody the cultural values and social system of an ancient, preindustrial society where the unit of survival was the extended family in late twentieth century American industrial society where the unit of survival is the individual and equality and autonomy are highly valued. The patriarchal social system of first century Mediterranean culture may well have been functional in that time and place. Co-dependency theory suggests that it is no longer healthy for contemporary individuals and social institutions.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2, “Co-dependency and Patriarchy in Western Christianity: First Century to the Reformation,” examines the historical and theological roots of the relationship between patriarchy, Christianity, and co-dependency from the beginning of the church through the continental Reformation. A discussion of key elements in first century Mediterranean culture provides the groundwork for an understanding of the patriarchal society in which Christianity developed. This is followed by an analysis of the ways this patriarchal world view is perpetuated and modified in the writings of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.

Chapters 3 and 4 continue this analysis, focusing on the ways patriarchy and its related co-dependency producing characteristics are expressed within the Anglican tradition as it evolved from the Reformation to the present day. This exploration is based on an examination of selected literature, identifying problematic areas and assessing potential for change.

In both chapters analysis of the Book of Common Prayer provides the basis for understanding the Anglican ethos as it develops through the centuries. There is no official Anglican theology, spelled out in a confessional statement or the decree of a church council. Rather there is an official prayer book used by all Anglicans in a given province for public worship. Anglicans may, and do, have different theological perspectives and opinions.

What they share is a common form of worship. This liturgy expresses the beliefs of the church which are in turn formed and shaped by the liturgy, as over and over again it interacts with the life of the people. Thus the prayer book is the primary key to understanding Anglican thought and practice. The analysis of the prayer book is supplemented by the examination of representative sources in each century.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relationship between patriarchy and co-dependency in the Anglican tradition in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Here primary works have been selected because of their importance to Anglican thought and/or because they reflect concerns of the day. These include Richard Hooker's theology, the spiritual writings of William Law and Jeremy Taylor, and selected sermons.

Chapter 4 examines trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Primary sources are used but the focus moves from individual authors to specific issues, and the discussion includes the insights of modern commentators. Nineteenth-century concerns related to patriarchy and co-dependence include the prevalent ideology of the ideal Victorian family and changing roles and expectations of women in church and society. In the twentieth-century discussions about prayer book revision and the ordination of women bring issues related to patriarchy and co-dependence into clear focus.

Chapter 5 builds on this foundation, summarizing the relationship between co-dependency and traditional patriarchal Christianity, examining co-dependency and patriarchy in contemporary American society, and discussing the implications of this relationship for the American church. The prevalence of the problem suggests that the church's ability to function and proclaim a gospel of love and justice in this time is related in part to its willingness to explore the relationship between its patriarchal beliefs and practices and the co-dependent dysfunction in individuals, society, and its own institutional structures. A review of the decision making process in the American Episcopal church suggests that change is possible if the church is willing to make a commitment to a process of institutional change that includes awareness of the effects of patriarchy and co-dependence and the planning and implementation of cultural change.

Chapter 6 presents one example of this change process using two contemporary

sources related to women and co-dependency--feminist theology and the co-dependence recovery movement--to critique traditional patriarchal Christian spirituality and suggest alternative approaches. A comparison of the assumptions and process of traditional spirituality with the spirituality of the co-dependence recovery movement and the insights of feminist theology highlights the issues and points to areas of change.

The discussion is based on a survey of representative literature from the three areas. Doctrinal statements and two classics of Western spirituality, Thomas à Kempis's Imitation of Christ and Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, have been chosen to represent traditional Christianity, à Kempis because he has had a continuing influence on both Roman Catholic and Protestant spirituality and Taylor because his work is considered characteristic of Anglican spirituality.⁵¹ Discussion of the spirituality of the recovery movement is based on selected popular books on co-dependence, especially those authored by women, and materials from Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA). Insights from feminist theology are drawn from a number of sources, especially Beverly Wildung Harrison, Heyward, Brock, and Plaskow.⁵²

The final chapter summarizes the findings and suggests implications for the ministry, influence and survival of the church.

⁵¹ Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, trans. Richard Whitford, ed. Harold C. Gardner (New York: Image Books, 1955); and Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden and Welsh, n. d.)

⁵² See Beverly Wildung Harrison, Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon, 1985); Carter Heyward, Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989); Brock; and Plaskow.

CHAPTER 2

Co-dependency and Patriarchy in Western Christianity:

First Century to the Reformation

Introduction

Patriarchy, the “form of social organization in which the father is the supreme authority in the family . . . and a society, community, or country based on this social organization,” is deeply rooted in Western culture.¹ This social system is organized around a gender based hierarchy that assumes the priority of males and defines all relationships in terms of superiority and inferiority. Such a system is based in a dualistic opposition that requires clear differentiation between the sexes, as well as between the ruling males and other subordinate groups--races, classes, children, slaves, employees, etc. These groups and their members are devalued. The values, ideals and beliefs of the ruling males become normative for the society and society is structured to meet their needs. Concern with maintaining this structure is reflected in the high value placed on control and order, which are achieved through domination and power based on violence.

This form of social organization, based on the structure, values, and world-view of the prehistoric patriarchal family, continues in contemporary Western society. The rise of individualism in the modern world simply expanded the rule of fathers to include other privileged men, and a patriarchal view still provides the base for contemporary Western views of “family, political, and psychic life.”²

First Century Mediterranean Culture

Present day Western patriarchy is rooted in the beliefs and values of the ancient Mediterranean world. The cultural groups of that world, while differing in many ways, shared certain beliefs, values, and social structures, among them a social organization based on a gender hierarchy. This patriarchal system predated Christianity, providing the foundation for Hebrew, Greek, and Roman society. The understandings and values of this

¹ “Patriarchy,” Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1st unabridged ed.

² Caroline Whitbeck, “A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology,” Women, Knowledge and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (Boston: Unwin Hayman, 1989), 55.

world-view are found throughout the Old and New Testaments and permeated the societies in which Christianity developed and took root.³ Perhaps it is not surprising that, after an initial period of openness, the institutionalizing church legitimized a patriarchal world view, using a gender hierarchy model for its own institutions and making patriarchal family structure the norm for Christian society, where it has remained, largely unquestioned, until the present day.

Bruce Malina uses a cultural anthropological framework to describe first century Mediterranean culture. Two of the cultural characteristics he describes, honor/shame and dyadic personality, are especially important to an understanding of the relationship between patriarchy and the process called co-dependency in the late twentieth century.

Malina identifies the honor/shame system as establishing the pivotal values for first century society.⁴ Honor is seen as reputation, shame as concern for reputation. Honor comes from public acknowledgement that one's actions conform to social norms and from maintaining one's rightful place in society.

Honor/shame is subdivided by gender. Males symbol and are responsible for honor, which is in turn "symbolized by the testicles which stand for manliness, courage, authority over family, willingness to defend one's reputation, and refusal to submit to humiliation."⁵ Male honor is involved in issues of social precedence, and males operate actively in the public sphere, defending the honor of themselves and their group. They do this through a complex series of competitive, agonistic challenges and responses that involve all contacts with anyone outside their circle of family and close friends. Gaining and keeping power is a very important aspect of honor and involves the control of people, rather than things.

Females symbol shame, seen as a positive sensitivity to the good reputation of individuals and groups. This female form of honor is inward and passive, "symbolized by the maidenhead (hymen) and stands for female sexual exclusiveness, discretion, shyness,

³ See Malina.

⁴ Malina, 27-48.

⁵ Malina, 42-43.

restraint, and timidity.”⁶ The sexual purity or exclusiveness of the female is all important and is always embedded within the honor of some male. Honorable women operate only in the private sphere of home and family. Men are active, responsible agents; women are passive and dependent.

In this system, self-esteem is based on honor and reputation, and both males and females look outside themselves for validation, focusing their attention on the opinions of others. This is accentuated for females by their social role as the symbol for concern for reputation and sensitivity to the opinions of others. Other characteristics of the patriarchal honor/shame system predispose women to co-dependency like behavior: because females are embedded within the honor of some male, women must be in relationship to a man in order to have honor; women are relegated to the sphere of the home with limited opportunities to gain reputation except in intimate personal relationships; and the virtues which bring women honor include submission to authority, unwillingness to risk, concern for shame, shyness, deference, passivity, timidity, and restraint—all of which are now seen as symptoms of co-dependency.

This focus on honor is closely related to the predominant personality type of the time, the dyadic personality. Malina’s description of this personality reads like a clinical description of co-dependency.

The dyadic personality is an individual who perceives himself and forms his self-image in terms of what others perceive and feed back to him. He feels a need of others for his very psychological existence, since the image he has of himself must agree with the image formulated and presented by significant others. . . . Every individual is perceived as embedded in some other . . . total self-awareness emphatically depends upon such group embeddedness. . . .⁷

Conscience is sensitivity to what others think about and expect of the individual. . . . The person is ever aware of the expectations, of others, especially significant others, and strives to match those expectations. . . . Since the dyadic personality derives its information from outside of the self, and in turn, serves as a source of outside information for others, anything unique that goes on inside of a person is filtered out of attention. . . .⁸

The honorable man would never expose his distinct individuality, his unique personhood, his inner self with its difficulties, weaknesses, confusions, and

⁶ Malina, 28.

⁷ Malina, 55.

⁸ Malina, 67.

inabilities. Rather, he knows how to keep his psychological core hidden and secret. . . . He is adept at keeping his innermost self concealed with a veil of conventionality and formality.”⁹

For such a person the locus of control is clearly outside the self. Motivation comes from the need to gain the good opinion of others by following the rules and doing what is expected. The modern concepts of a true self or interior life would be foreign; in the first century the only self is the self defined by others. Again, women are especially affected because of the value placed on their passivity and because their relegation to the private sphere makes them dependent on males for economic survival and a place in the social order, as well as for their honor and self-esteem.

The first-century Mediterranean family is patriarchal in its most literal sense--a patrilineal, patrilocal, father-centered kin group in which the father must be followed and obeyed. He is above criticism and can do no wrong because he is the arbiter of right and wrong.¹⁰ In early Roman legal codes fathers, as the heads of their household, had power of life or death over their children. Although this absolute power has diminished by the first century, infanticide, especially of female children, is still practiced by fathers.¹¹

In discussing marriage in ancient Israel, L. William Countryman notes that women are seen as property, possessions of their husbands and their husbands' family. The family “hierarchy was an expression of property relations, a way of exercising ownership over human property, whether slaves or concubines or children or wives.”¹² Marriages are arranged with an eye to the prestige of the woman's father, the prospective husband, and their families. Marriage is the only appropriate role for women. Countryman notes that both Greek and biblical Hebrew do not differentiate between woman and wife, using the same word for both.¹³

In the family hierarchy, males always take precedence over females, parents over

⁹ Malina, 52.

¹⁰ Malina, 42.

¹¹ See Max Cary and T. J. Haarhoff, *Life and Thought in the Greek and Roman World*, 5th ed. (London: Methuen, 1951), 77, 142; and L. P. Wilkinson, *The Roman Experience* (London: Paul Elek, 1975), 121.

¹² L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 159.

¹³ Countryman, 155, 151.

children, masters over slaves.¹⁴ Although sons gain in opportunities to escape their father's authority, freedom for women increases more slowly, and women always remain under the authority of a male--father, husband, or other male relative.¹⁵ Countryman notes that in Israel, "The power of the father and then of the husband meant that a woman could enjoy, at most, only a secondary role in whatever household she belonged to--a status pointedly underlined by the right which the Torah gave to her father (before her marriage) or her husband to annul even her vows to God (Num. 30:3-15)."¹⁶

Roman writers of the first century describe the ideal wife as a care-giver who nurtures children and men, "chaste, domestic, a good housekeeper, a rearer of children; one to gladden you in health, to tend you in sickness . . .,"¹⁷ and praise, "your goodness, obedience, sweetness, kindness, your diligent spinning and weaving, your piety, the discretion of your clothes and jewelry . . . your affection and devotion to your relatives."¹⁸

According to Malina, first century families tend to be extended and multigenerational with much interaction between family members. There is an emphasis on tradition. The family is a closed social network that tends to be geographically and socially immobile. Problems are handled within the family. Economically, the family is a unit of production with work sharply segregated by sex. Men operate in the public sphere, women in the private world of home and family.¹⁹ When education is available for women, it tends to be limited to preparation for the traditional role of household manager. Some women, especially in the upper classes and in urban areas, have more flexibility, and are active in business, social, and religious activities outside the home. When this occurs, it tends to be opposed by conservative pressure for traditional values.²⁰

¹⁴ Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 23.

¹⁵ Cary and Haarhoff, 142.

¹⁶ Countryman, 152.

¹⁷ Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman History*, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Macmillan Co., 1924), Bk. 56, VII, pp. 5ff, quoted in Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, eds., *Not in God's Image* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 47.

¹⁸ *Laudatio Turiae*, "Eloge funebre d' une matrone romaine: Eloge dit de Turia", ed. Marcel Durry, Collection des Univesites de France, 1950, 8 ff., quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, 58.

¹⁹ Malina, 94-117.

²⁰ Meeks, 23-25.

The primary purpose of marriage is reproduction, and people tend to marry at a young age.²¹ Malina describes first century marriage as “a process of disembedding the female from her family and embedding her in her husband--and his family. Females are always perceived as embedded in some male unless they find themselves in the anomalous situation of being a widow or divorcee without kin.”²² Women are seen as somewhat peripheral to their husbands’ kin group, and thus spend much of their lives as strangers in their husband’s home.²³ This may have led to a basic insecurity in relationships, and this combined with their young age, lower status, and sense of being embedded in males, would reinforce behaviors that modern society would see as co-dependent.

Throughout this description of the first century Mediterranean world there are clear indications of many characteristics that are now called co-dependent. Some involve issues of self identity: a poor sense of personal identity; self-concept and self-worth derived from others; the reference point for thought, feelings and values outside the self; self esteem issues, guilt, shame, inadequacy, powerlessness, despair, made especially problematic for women by their status as inferiors and as symbols of shame.

Preoccupation with relationships, the need to feel connected, the fear of rejection and abandonment, the embeddedness in others that is especially true for women -- all are prime symptoms of co-dependency. Societal values and the limitation of women’s outlets to home and family predispose them especially to become self-denying caretakers.

The need for control--of self, others, and appearances--is central to the culture and loss of control is a primary fear. Passion was distrusted and feelings controlled. Men exercised control through domination. Women, with little direct power, must have used indirect means such as guilt and manipulation.

Descriptions of first century families contain many elements that would be seen as dysfunctional today including: an authoritarian structure valuing obedience and discouraging an emotional environment conducive to trust and self-disclosure; potential and actual physical violence; and little interest in the growth and development of family

²¹ In Roman law the minimum marriage age for females was 12, males 14. See Wilkinson, 118-20.

²² Malina, 117.

²³ Malina, 103-04.

members as individuals.

This cultural system may have served important social and survival functions in its societies of origin, but it can create problems, such as co-dependency, when it is applied in other historical periods and different cultural contexts. Nevertheless, this basic pattern has persisted through time. It is grounded in a relatively static social system in which stability is valued and change and innovation discouraged. This distrust of change is rooted in the hierarchical social order and the widespread perception of limited good.

Malina discusses this process.²⁴ The world is viewed as a hierarchy, ranging from God/s at the top to inanimate objects at the bottom, and persons are seen standing in a vertical relationship with each other. Survival and honor involve maintaining one's place on the ladder. The perception of limited good--the belief that all goods in life are finite and limited--means one can improve oneself only at the expense of others. Thus stability and harmony can exist only if existing status arrangements remain intact. Changes in status are perceived as dangerous--to oneself and to social and civil order.

This mistrust of change and the linking of order, hierarchy, and social survival has proved a potent factor in the conservation and maintenance of this world view--reinforcing the control of dominant groups and discouraging attempts at change by repressed groups, including women. Any movement toward change could be countered by fears of social disintegration, and all groups could be convinced that the way things are is the way they ought to be--with the oughts reinforced by strong social, religious, and psychological sanctions. It is not surprising that early Christianity, growing up in such a world, accepted these values, almost without question, and made them a part of Christian teaching.

Whatever seems necessary for survival has a tendency to become sacred,²⁵ and so the hierarchical order, including gender hierarchy, comes to be seen as a divine institution. In early Christian thought this form of social organization is seen as the divine order, "the will of God," and scripture is interpreted to support this contention.

Augustine

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is an important figure in the preservation of

²⁴ Malina, 71-89.

²⁵ Ritley, cassette.

patriarchal views in Christian tradition because he articulated an understanding of the Christian faith that has deeply influenced subsequent Christian thought in the West. He was the primary theological authority until Aquinas in the thirteenth century, had a profound effect on Reformation thought and subsequent Protestant theology, and continues to be an important influence in contemporary American Christianity.²⁶

Augustine's thought was influenced by Christian scripture and Greek philosophy, which, along with the common social practice of his time, were rooted in the assumptions and values of Mediterranean culture. Augustine did not question these cultural beliefs, but assumed their place in the divine order, justifying them with new arguments from scripture.

He believed in a divinely ordered creation that provides the fixed hierarchical model for human society. Like his patriarchal society he valued harmony and order and saw them based on a clear hierarchical relationship between a superior and an inferior. His writings reflect these cultural values and beliefs.

According to Augustine, the state should be an ordered hierarchy based on command and obedience that uses violence, if necessary, to maintain peace and order.²⁷ Woman should be subordinate to man as the church is subordinate to Christ and the body is subordinate to the soul.²⁸

The Apostle has made known to us certain three unions, Christ and the Church, husband and wife, spirit and flesh. Of these the former consult for the good of the latter, the latter wait upon the former. All the things are good, when in them, certain set over by way of preeminence, certain made subject in a becoming manner, observe the beauty of order. Husband and wife receive command and pattern how they ought to be one with another. The command is, "Let wives be subject unto their own husbands as unto the Lord; because the husband is the head of the wife."²⁹

²⁶ See Eberhard Simons, "Augustinianism," Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 54, 57-60.

²⁷ P. R. L. Brown. "Political Society," Augustine, ed. R. A. Markus (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 317, 324-25.

²⁸ Børresen, 34-35.

²⁹ Augustine is quoting Eph. 5:22-28 in "On Continence," On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises, vol. 3 of A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ser. 1, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Co., 1887), 23.

Augustine sees this order based on nature and legitimized by the authority of scripture.

Nor can it be doubted, that it is more consonant with the order of nature that men should bear rule over women, than women over men. It is with this principle in view that the apostle says, "The head of the woman is the man;" and, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands."³⁰

Augustine uses quotations from Paul and arguments based on his interpretation of Genesis 1-2 to justify women's subordinate status. According to his theory of creation, men and women share the same internal rational soul, and are equal in the non-sexual redemptive order which will exist in heaven.³¹ However, woman is subordinate in her external, bodily, temporal existence because of the secondary nature of her creation: woman was created from man and thus is dependent on him for the physical material of her body, and she was created for man, to be his helpmate, which is seen as a subordinate position.³²

God is superior in the hierarchical system, therefore only that which is also in a superior position can fully image God. Because man is in the superior position, his exterior humanity as well as his rational soul reflect the divine image. For woman there is a duality between her interior and exterior status—interiorly she possesses the image of God in her rational soul and so is fully human in this dimension, but externally she is inferior. Her body and physical existence are not in the image of God. Thus, man is complete and can represent the image of God by himself. Woman is incomplete, and can image God only in connection with her husband.³³

The woman together with her husband is the image of God, so that the whole substance is one image. But when she is assigned as a helpmate, a function which pertains to her alone, then she is not in the image of God, just as fully and completely as when he and the woman are joined together in one.³⁴

³⁰ Here Augustine is quoting 1 Cor. 11:3 and Col. 3:18 in "On Marriage and Concupiscence," Writings Against the Pelagians, vol. 5 of A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ser. 1, ed. Philip Scaff (1887; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 267.

³¹ See Børresen, 25-27, 324-25.

³² Børresen, 20.

³³ See Allen, 222; Børresen, 27-28.

³⁴ Augustine, The Trinity, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), XII, Chap. 7, 351, quoted in Allen, 222.

For Augustine, the male is the complete human, the ideal to which woman is compared.³⁵ Her basic inferiority in this life is a given of creation. And this original subordination is compounded after the original fall because the woman's punishment for sin includes domination by her husband.³⁶

Augustine saw woman's role as helpmate in very specific terms--her purpose is to assist man in the reproduction of the human race.³⁷ And even in this limited role her part is passive. Reflecting the biological ideas of the time Augustine believed that the man is the active contributor of the seed and the woman its passive recipient--a kind of nurturing incubator.³⁸

Augustine distrusted sexuality and valued celibacy highly. This led to a new concept: because woman's secondary status is related to her physical, sexual nature, she becomes equal to man only when she gives up her sexuality, either in a sexless heaven or by living on earth as virgin.³⁹

In this world, women are incomplete and defined by their relationship to males, either husbands or a male God. In discussing Augustine's beliefs Børresen notes, "Because the existence of woman is ordained for that of man, her state of life is defined by her relationship with him: she is bound to a husband in marriage, or she is released from this bond by widowhood; the virgin alone is independent, her existence being directed wholly towards God."⁴⁰

Chastity and obedience are the primary virtues for women. Men rule and women obey because women do not possess higher powers of reasoning and should be ruled by a man, whose "rational discernment is capable of ordering both his mind and hers."⁴¹ Augustine's description of the ideal Christian woman was based on his mother and included such virtues as patience, submission to husband, and devotion to neighbors "as if

³⁵ Børresen, 26-30; and Allen, 385.

³⁶ Børresen, 61.

³⁷ Børresen, 17.

³⁸ Børresen, 42.

³⁹ Allen, 122; and Børresen, 113.

⁴⁰ Børresen, 93.

⁴¹ Børresen, 93.

she were the mother of them all.”⁴²

For Augustine virginity is the ideal, marriage is a secondary good, part of the order of creation willed by God primarily for the propagation and nurture of children in the Christian faith. “In begetting children . . . marital intercourse makes something good out of the evil of lust.”⁴³ To have sexual intercourse for any reason other than reproduction is a sin.⁴⁴ The faithfulness of the partner and symboling of the bond between Christ and the church are also goods of Christian marriage.⁴⁵ He also cites the “companionship between the two sexes” as one of the goods of marriage, especially if enables early abstention “by mutual consent from sexual intercourse.”⁴⁶ However, the inferior status of women makes a true friendship between husband and wife impossible.⁴⁷

Augustine envisions the family as the typical Mediterranean patriarchal father centered kin-group and his views on marriage reflect the social and legal thinking of his time. He sees the marriage contract giving the husband the right of ownership of his wife, making her the servant of her husband. She is to regard her husband as lord in words and actions.⁴⁸ The husband symbolizes spirit because he commands, the wife flesh because she obeys and serves. “Flesh therefore stands for the wife, similarly spirit sometimes stands for the husband. Why? Because one governs and the other is governed, one ought to command and the other to serve.”⁴⁹ Her behavior reflects on her husband’s honor and she is to be faithful and live in “chaste fear.” Augustine condemns adulterous husbands, but believes that women “in their position of subordination . . . should bear with other forms of ill treatment.”⁵⁰

⁴² Børresen, 4.

⁴³ Augustine, “The Good of Marriage,” in St. Augustine Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects, trans. Charles T. Wilcox, ed. Roy J. Deffari, Fathers of the Church Series (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955), 13.

⁴⁴ Augustine, “The Good of Marriage,” 17.

⁴⁵ Augustine, “On Marriage and Concupiscence,” 271.

⁴⁶ Augustine, “The Good of Marriage,” 12.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth A. Clark, Women in the Early Church (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1983), 28-29.

⁴⁸ Børresen, 95-96.

⁴⁹ Augustine, “Homily on the Gospel of St. John,” Oeuvres, eds. B. Roland-Gosselin et al. (Paris: Desclée, De Vrouwer, 1936), II, 14, 201-203, quoted in Allen, 234.

⁵⁰ Børresen, 96.

Because women are identified with passion, sexuality, and the physical, Augustine's fear and distrust of sex and the body leads to fear and disparaging of women, especially any expression of female sexuality. He seems to see flesh and blood women as not fully human, useful only in reproduction and serving men, and possibly dangerous, distracting men from intellectual and spiritual pursuits.⁵¹

In a major innovation in Western thought, Augustine introduces a quality of introspection and emphasis on individual will that is new to the classic Mediterranean personality. He has been called the "first modern man," and his Confessions referred to as the "first great document in the history of introspective conscience."⁵² He believes that all knowledge is based on introspection and self knowledge.⁵³ His own search for truth turns inward, and he finds truth in his interior encounter with God. He writes, "in you yourself does the truth dwell," and, addressing God, "When I recognize myself, I recognize You!"⁵⁴

Augustine is the first philosopher to consider psychological aspects of person and personality and to see humans as individuals as well as members of society.⁵⁵ He sees thinking as "inner speaking," and ponders such intrapsychic phenomena as imagination, memory, sense perception.⁵⁶

In common with Greek and Roman philosophical thought he is suspicious of passion, and continues to emphasize the importance of the control of emotions, especially concupiscence, by the rational soul.⁵⁷ "It is the place of continence to keep watch to restrain and heal all delights whatsoever of lust, which are opposed to the delight of wisdom."⁵⁸

⁵¹ Allen, 233-34.

⁵² Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," The Writings of St. Paul, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (New York: Norton, 1972), 426.

⁵³ Gerald O'Daly, Augustine's Philosophy of Mind (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 207.

⁵⁴ As quoted by Simons, 55.

⁵⁵ Paul Henry, Saint Augustine on Personality, Saint Augustine Lecture Series, (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 1.

⁵⁶ Gareth B. Matthews, "The Inner Man," Augustine, ed. R. A. Markus (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1972), 181.

⁵⁷ Børresen, 2.

⁵⁸ Augustine, "On Continence," 391.

For the most part Augustine's writings perpetuate the co-dependency related attitudes and values of patriarchal Mediterranean culture, baptizing them into Christianity and giving them theological respectability. He reflects his society's preoccupation with control, emphasizing both the control of emotions and the importance of hierarchical control in the family and society. Violence is accepted as a means of assuring this control. The Augustinian family remains an authoritarian institution with all its co-dependency producing tendencies.

Augustine does begin to move Western consciousness from its exclusive focus on an external point of reference for self identity to a more introspective consideration of the interior life and emphasis on the individual, thus mitigating one of the factors predisposing to co-dependence—at least in men. Augustine's women seem to remain embedded in relationships, where they are expected to be self-sacrificing caregivers.

In fact, Augustine's ideal Christian woman sounds like a twentieth-century description of co-dependence: submissive, obedient, non-rational, tolerating abusive behavior, serving others. She is left little choice but to be preoccupied with relationships. A married woman's purpose is limited to reproduction, her life to the private sphere of family and home, serving husband and neighbors. Augustine does allow her the alternative of remaining a virgin, but here the price of any sense of equality is the denial of the sexual element of self.

He seems to add to women's difficulty with self-esteem. The assumption of female inferiority permeates his writing. And most damaging, he suggests that, while her rational soul may be equal, in the created order woman is innately inferior—something is wrong with her just because she is female and not male. It is impossible to know what impact this had on women of Augustine's day, but for contemporary twentieth-century women the internalization of this concept can lead to a deep sense of inferiority and shame that can be very damaging to their self esteem and sense of self.⁵⁹

Low self-esteem in women and almost limitless power in men, combined with Christian teachings glorifying suffering, provide optimal conditions for the abuse of

⁵⁹ Schaef calls this "the Original Sin of Being Born Female," and discusses it in detail in Women's Reality, 23-50.

women.⁶⁰ Augustine contributes to this, sanctioning domestic violence and advocating acceptance of abusive treatment as appropriate female behavior--thus making perpetrator/victim relationships normative for Christians, and toleration of abuse a virtue and duty for Christian women.⁶¹

Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was the most influential philosopher in the Middle Ages. His thought has been extremely important in the Western church, providing the basis for Roman Catholic dogma until the Second Vatican Council. He combined ideas from Augustine and other traditional Christian thinkers with the philosophy of Aristotle.⁶² Aquinas accepted the patriarchal views of his medieval society and supported them with arguments based on Christian scripture, Aristotelian philosophy, and his observations of the world around him.

Aquinas' theological writings reflect his patriarchal world view. He believes that hierarchical relationships are inherent in the nature of things: "It is better therefore for one person to rule than for many to try to achieve unity. In addition, whatever is in accord with nature is best, for nature always operates for the best. But in nature government is always by one." This is "apparent from experience" and is true of bees and of the whole universe where "one God is the Maker and Ruler of all."⁶³

Like Augustine, he sees a divinely ordained gender hierarchy ordering human society.

On the contrary, It is written (Rom. xiii. I): *The things which are of God, are well ordered.* But order consists chiefly in inequality, for Augustine says: *Order disposes things equal and unequal in their proper place.* Therefore in the first state, which would have been most proper and orderly, inequality would exist. *I answer that*, We must needs admit that in the first state there would have been some inequality, at least as regards sex, because generation depends upon diversity of sex.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ The serious and far reaching effects of this and other theology is discussed by Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God So Loved the World?" Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse, eds. Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989).

⁶¹ Ruether, "The Western Religious Tradition and Violence in the Home," 31-32.

⁶² Paul E. Sigmund, St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics (New York: Norton, 1988), xii.

⁶³ Aquinas, "On Kingship," Chap. 2., quoted in Sigmund, 17-18.

⁶⁴ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, vol. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), 487-88.

In an hierarchical world diversity means inequality by definition.

Aquinas sees woman as created in the image of God, but reflecting this image less perfectly than man, according to the theory of hierarchy of perfection.⁶⁵ Man was created first, and thus is a direct, more perfect image of God. Woman's secondary creation means that she is a derived, less perfect image of God.⁶⁶

When all things were first formed, it was more suitable for the woman to be made from the man. . . . First, in order thus to give the first man a certain dignity consisting in this, that as God is the principle of the whole universe, so the first man, in likeness of God, was the principle of the whole human race.⁶⁷

In Aquinas, as in Augustine, the male is the norm for the human race.

A second argument for woman's inferior state is based on her role in reproduction as defined by Aristotelian biology.⁶⁸ This theory sees the male has the active partner in reproduction, providing the seed, while the woman is passive, providing matter.

In the higher animals brought into being through coitus, the active power resides in the male's semen, as Aristotle says, while the material of the fetus is supplied by the female.⁶⁹

The active power which is in the semen cannot be caused by the mother (although some indeed maintain this), because the woman is not an active principle but a passive one.⁷⁰

Woman is passive by definition and passivity is inferior to activity. Man as father shares active power with God. Women cannot share in this identity.⁷¹

This biology sees the female as an imperfect male, her birth the result of an accident of conception.

The active principle in the male seed always tends toward the generation of a male offspring, which is more perfect than the female. From this it follows that conception of a female offspring is something of an accident in the order of nature--insofar as it is not the result of the natural causality of the particular agent.⁷²

⁶⁵ Allen, 389.

⁶⁶ Børresen, 173.

⁶⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1: 467.

⁶⁸ Allen, 392-99; and Børresen, 178.

⁶⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1a, 118, 1, quoted in Allen, 393.

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *De Anima*, Art. 9, 5, 146, quoted in Allen, 395.

⁷¹ Allen, 385-98.

⁷² Aquinas, "Truth," Art. 9, 245, quoted in Allen, 392.

For the active power in the seed of the male tends to produce something like itself, perfect in masculinity; but the procreation of a female is the result either of the debility of the active power, or some unsuitability of the material, or of some change affected by external influences, like the south wind, for example, which is damp, as we are told by Aristotle.⁷³

The perfect human is male. The female is imperfect, inferior in her very nature.

Because of its generation, the female body is imperfect, and Aquinas reasons from the inferiority of the female body to the inferiority of the female mind.⁷⁴ She is less rational, less suited to intellectual pursuits, less capable of firm judgment. As a result women are weak in virtue, unable to order themselves and their emotions.⁷⁵ Therefore, “The female needs the male, not merely for the sake of generation, as in the case of other animals, but for the sake of government. Since the male is both more perfect in his reasoning and stronger in his powers.”⁷⁶ Again, for slightly different reasons, men are to rule, women to obey.

Aquinas sees women as inferior to males in their nature: passive, emotional, weak in reason, less capable of friendship. As befits their condition, they cannot aspire to the male virtues of temperance, courage, justice, and prudence. Their primary virtues are obedience, silence, and modesty. Women should confine themselves to the private sphere. They ought not to teach or seek holy orders, because women are by nature “in a state of subjection” and cannot assume authority.⁷⁷ Women can, however aspire to the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity which are received in part by grace. After the resurrection men and women will continue to have their sexual identities, but will live in a perfection now differentiated in value, not by their sex, but by the merit of their lives.⁷⁸ In this life, however, female roles are determined by their lesser degree of perfection. Their function is to bear children and be a helpmate to men, and their sphere the domestic world

⁷³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1: 466.

⁷⁴ Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Between the Sexes* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 109.

⁷⁵ Allen, 402.

⁷⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, II, 123, 3, quoted in Allen, 403.

⁷⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 3, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948), 2698.

⁷⁸ Allen, 402-07.

of family and household.⁷⁹

Aquinas prefers virginity, but values marriage for its goods: the reproduction, nurturance, and education of children and “the mutual services which married persons render one another in household matters.”⁸⁰ He sees marriage and the family in the traditional patriarchal model. Women are to be subject to the head of the household, because they were created to provide a helper to man. There is a natural, sex-determined differentiation in roles: “Among those works that are necessary for human life some are becoming to men, others to women.”⁸¹ He is not as suspicious of sex as Augustine, and says that the virtue of chastity can be present in sexual acts directed toward procreation. For Aquinas, the functions of marriage continue to be more social and familial than individual or interpersonal, but he does place a new value on the partnership and friendship of domestic life.⁸²

Like women, children are subordinate and obedience is a primary virtue. Children “have a natural duty, while their parents are instructing them, to be obedient to them--as the sick are to obey doctors. Hence the proper characteristic of children is obedience.”⁸³

Aquinas studies human persons using Aristotle’s method of uncovering “what is proper to individual living things.”⁸⁴ The chief end of all things is to become like God.⁸⁵ Following Aristotle, he sees body and soul (actuality and potentiality, matter and form) as one.⁸⁶ Persons are “individual beings having a rational nature.”⁸⁷ Aquinas seems less introspective than Augustine in his discussion of human personality, more interested in abstractions and less in direct experience.

From the point of view of co-dependency, Aquinas’ major contribution in the study

⁷⁹ Børresen, 157, 171.

⁸⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3: 2711.

⁸¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3: 2711.

⁸² Cahill, 106-07.

⁸³ Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians* (Albany, N.Y.: Magi, 1966), 227.

⁸⁴ Aquinas, “Commentary on Soul I,” *An Aquinas Reader*, ed. Mary T. Clark (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image, 1972), 211.

⁸⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1: 19, cited in Mary Clark, 209-10.

⁸⁶ Aquinas, “Commentary of Soul II,” cited in Mary Clark, 211-14; and Børresen, 151-53.

⁸⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, ques, 29, a. 1, quoted in Mary Clark, 222-23.

of human personality is his more unified, less dualistic view of the human person as both body and mind. His views on women and sexuality are different from those of Augustine and other theologians in some respects, but not necessarily more positive. Women share the divine image, but less perfectly than men do. While he believes that women can aspire to the theological virtues, he would reduce their already limited access to the public sphere, forbidding them to teach and to receive holy orders. Compared to Augustine he is somewhat less suspicious of sex and more willing to see value in the companionship of married life. But he adds Aristotle's ideas about women's passive role in reproduction, accidental conception, and imperfect body to Christian thought.

Aquinas' views on women, children, and marriage continue to mirror the values of a patriarchal society, justified by a rationale based on philosophy, scripture, and his observation of nature. So he, too, perpetuates those tendencies in patriarchal families and society that, in contemporary culture, predispose persons, especially women, to co-dependent attitudes and behaviors.

When applied today, concepts from Aquinas' theology put women at risk for co-dependency: the belief in and justification for their innate inferiority, their relegation to a domestic role of reproduction and service, the emphasis on their incompleteness without a man to think for them, and the familiar litany of female characteristics: passivity, weakness, emotionality, difficulty with rational thought, submissiveness. All of this continues to enmesh women in relationships, discourage independent thought and action, limit their power and opportunities for growth, and lead to deep feelings of inferiority.

The Reformation

In the midst of a revolution in theology and ecclesiology, the continental Protestant Reformation continued the basic pattern of gender hierarchy that had characterized Western Christianity since its beginnings. The Reformers expressed many of the old patriarchal ideas, using familiar theological and biblical rationale. Among their new emphases, three of are special interest to this discussion of co-dependence: the high status given to marriage and family with an associated emphasis on the mutual dependence of husband and wife, the continued toleration and encouragement of domestic violence, and the reduction of role

options for women.

In their writings both Luther and Calvin affirm the inferiority of women as part of divine order, although this is now a result of the fall, and not of an inequality in creation.⁸⁸ For Luther woman is fully human, but she is “inferior to the male sex . . . much weaker nature . . . not equal of the male in glory and prestige.”⁸⁹ Her purpose is still to be man’s helper, with the helping role now extended beyond reproduction to include companionship. As Calvin notes, “Woman is given as a companion and an associate to the man, to assist him to live well.”⁹⁰

A new value is placed on marriage and the husband/wife relationship. Women are still seen as incomplete without men, but the reverse is also becoming true--men are now seen as incomplete without women.

These themes are continued and expanded in later writings in the reform tradition as women are made responsible for the happiness of men and husband and wife become more and more enmeshed. For example, writing in the seventeenth century, John Milton sees women as beautiful, submissive “instruments of men’s happiness,” created to provide them with “comfort,” “solace”, and companionship.⁹¹ Two hundred years later Sarah Grimke, while differing from the reformers in her rejection of a gender hierarchy and advocacy of female autonomy and equality, seems to agree with their ideal of male and female complementarity. She writes, “I believe God designed woman to be an help meet for man in every good and perfect work. She was a part of himself . . . designed to make the oneness and identity of man and woman perfect and complete.”⁹²

In the Reformation sex, marriage, and family life are no longer viewed as second best alternatives to virginity, but are seen as commanded by God and intrinsic to human

⁸⁸ Cahill, 126-27.

⁸⁹ Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5, vol. 1 of Luther’s Works, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 27.

⁹⁰ John Calvin, A Commentary on Genesis, trans. and ed. John King, (1847; reprint, London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 129. Also see Luther, “A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage,” The Christian in Society, vol. 44 of Luther’s Works, ed. James Atkinson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962).

⁹¹ Mary Beacom Bowers, “Milton’s Conception of Woman,” Ohio Journal of Religious Studies 4, no. 1 (March 1976): 20-22.

⁹² Sarah M. Grimke, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman (1838; reprint New York: Lenox Hill, 1970), 5.

nature. The family is viewed as the basic institution of society, the training ground for civic virtue and an avenue for religious salvation--“a penitential institution . . . where the responsibility, self-discipline, and suffering of marriage . . . is part of the process by which mankind recovers from its fallen condition.”⁹³ Now the family, rather than the church, is seen as necessary for spiritual survival, and it has become sacred.

Steven Ozment describes this time in Europe as “the heyday of the patriarchal nuclear family.” He notes modern criticism of this family structure, “with its seemingly total subjection of the wife to home and husband, of the home to the production of children, and of the children to the will of their parents.”⁹⁴

The reformers’ emphasis on the authority of the husband and father as head of the household, the obedience of subordinates, and the importance of discipline encourages the abuse of women and children. Calvin advises women to bear the husband’s physical abuse with patience.⁹⁵ Luther cautions parents against “spoiling children” and “false natural love [that] blinds parents so that they have more regard for the bodies of their children than they have for their souls,” and goes on to cite quotations from Proverbs about the “rod of discipline” and beating your child with the rod to “save his life from hell.”⁹⁶

With the closing of the convents, women’s already limited vocational choices narrow to marriage and the relational roles of wife and mother. Public roles, as well, became even more limited, and women are confined more and more to the sphere of the household.⁹⁷

Thus the Reformation adds new factors that, when taught by the contemporary church, can encourage attitudes and behaviors related to co-dependency. At the same time that the importance of the conscience of the individual is emphasized in religious matters, the emphasis on complementarity in marriage encourages both men and women to feel incomplete if they are not in a relationship. This, coupled with the idealization of marriage,

⁹³ Steven Ozment, When Fathers Ruled (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 8-9. See also Cahill, 123.

⁹⁴ Ozment, 2.

⁹⁵ Jane Dempsey Douglass, Women, Freedom, and Calvin (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 86.

⁹⁶ Luther, “A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage,” 13.

⁹⁷ Douglass, 86-88.

gives rise to the modern idea of romantic love. Schaef calls this the myth of the “Perfect Marriage . . . [where] two half-people relate to each other in symbiotic fashion.”⁹⁸ Roles are assigned according to the old public/private dichotomy. In public the man is the parent, dealing with the outside world, taking care of finances, etc., and the woman is the child. In private the man is the child and the woman is the parent, feeding, clothing, and meeting emotional and sexual needs. Schaef notes that the rigidity of this form of marriage allows little opportunity for mutual support and respect or for the growth of either partner.⁹⁹

As part of this process, the care-giving role women expands beyond traditional obligations for meeting the physical needs of their husbands and the nurturance of their children and other dependents to include responsibility for the happiness and psychological well-being of their spouses—a situation that would be considered co-dependent today.

In the Reformation, males continue to be preoccupied with issues of control in church, state, and family. The emphasis on the authoritarian family, with subordinate women and children serving and obeying the dominant father, provides the setting for many kinds of exploitation. It is likely that the needs, feelings, perceptions, opinions of the dominant father are central, while those of other family members are discounted. Women and children would have little opportunity for expression or validation of their feelings and perceptions. Physical abuse of children is encouraged, and they are socialized into roles as victims and perpetrators. Alice Miller has traced the tragic historical and social results of this process, and the resistance her ideas have faced are an indication of how deeply these beliefs are still held in Western culture.¹⁰⁰

As before, women are especially vulnerable. They are still defined by men, and seen as inferior adjuncts to the normative male, existing to meet his needs for a reproductive partner, caretaker, companion, and housekeeper. Their needs, experiences, and viewpoints are ignored. The emphasis on the subordinate status and the womanly virtues of obedience, submission, self-sacrifice, silence and passivity, combined with teachings about the redemptive power of suffering and toleration of abuse, encourage

⁹⁸ Schaef, *Women's Reality*, 58.

⁹⁹ Schaef, *Women's Reality*, 58-62.

¹⁰⁰ See Miller, *For Your Own Good*.

women to accept the role of victim as appropriate to their female status. As women are more and more confined to domestic roles in home and family, their options narrow to a more exclusive focus on relationships as an outlet for self-expression and exercise of power. Relationships become even more important as the source of self esteem. Service and self-sacrifice impress others and become a method of indirect control. Church and society teach women that all of this is appropriate role behavior.

These beliefs and values, beginning in first century Mediterranean culture and perpetuated and modified through the history of the Western church, are reflected in the Anglicanism that emerges in the English Reformation. And they continue to be a part of present-day American Christianity, contributing to contemporary family dysfunction and co-dependency.

CHAPTER 3

Co-dependency and Patriarchy in the Anglican Tradition: The Reformation through the Eighteenth Century

Introduction

The Anglican church shares the patriarchal tradition of Western Christianity. All of the historic Catholic and newly articulated Reform ideas influenced Anglicanism as it began to form its own identity in the English Reformation. As the Anglican ethos develops, the continuing relationship between patriarchy and co-dependence can be traced in the changing Book of Common Prayer as well as the writings of representative Anglican authors.

Sixteenth Century: The Reformation

Introduction

In England the Reformation began as a political movement, and the great theological and ecclesiastical issues of the time were eventually resolved in a political solution, the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559. This synthesis of traditional Catholic tradition and Reform theology provides the basis for what has come to be called the Anglican ethos. This can perhaps be seen most clearly in the Book of Common Prayer (1559) and the writing of Richard Hooker. The following section examines these works as well as the Thirty-nine Articles and selected sermons of the period, focusing on areas related to co-dependency, especially in women.

The Book of Common Prayer (1559)

Traditionally Anglicanism has expressed its theological understanding through liturgy rather than in formal decrees or confessional statements. Thus the Book of Common Prayer provides the primary key to understanding Anglican thought.

The Book of Common Prayer (1559) represents a compromise between the conservative medieval Catholic tradition and new Protestant ideas influenced by the continental reformers. It was officially adopted by the state for use in the Church of England and everyone was required to attend the services. Thus it had far reaching impact on English thought, “providing services of worship, a basis for religious education,

standards of doctrine, copious amounts of Holy Scripture, and a use of English which contributed to the formation of the modern language.”¹

The Book of Common Prayer (1559) was an important agent of moral education and social control, and was used as a form of community discipline.² Thus its teaching of values and appropriate role behavior had a potentially profound impact on the beliefs of people about themselves and their society.

The contents of the prayer book are varied and certainly include praise and thanksgiving, but the predominant tone of penitence tends to project a negative view of human nature, and seems to emphasize sin, guilt, and unworthiness. The service of “Public Baptism” is clear that “all men be conceived and born in sin.”³ The General Confession of “Morning Prayer,” the most common service at that time, teaches that God is to be approached with “an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart,”⁴ and prays, “There is no health in us . . . have mercy upon us miserable offenders.”⁵ Although the service of “Holy Communion” talks about God’s forgiveness, it contains a similar general confession and many exhortations about receiving communion unworthily.⁶ The Litany begins with repetitions of the phrase “Have mercy upon us miserable sinners,” and suggests an angry and potentially vengeful God.

Remember not, Lord, our offenses, nor the offenses of our forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us good Lord, spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us forever.⁷

This impression is enhanced by the rite of “Commination against Sinners” in which the people are called together to hear exhortations against sin and a series of curses (“Cursed is he that curseth his father and mother”, etc.) directed to those who break the Ten

¹ John E. Booty, ed., The Book of Common Prayer, 1559 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), 327, hereafter cited as BCP (1559).

² Booty, BCP (1559), 328.

³ Booty, BCP (1559), 170.

⁴ Booty, BCP (1559), 50.

⁵ Booty, BCP (1559), 51.

⁶ Booty, BCP (1559), 254-59.

⁷ Booty, BCP (1559), 68.

Commandments, followed by a penitential service.⁸

Suffering is seen as good. The “Order for the Visitation of the Sick” affirms that illness is sent by God (“Whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God’s visitation”)⁹ as a test of faith, an example to others, and/or a warning to repent. Sickness and adversity are to be endured patiently and seen as a sign of God’s love.

Take therefore in good worth the chastisement of the Lord, for whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth . . . we should patiently and with thanksgiving bear our heavenly Father’s correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please his gracious goodness to visit us. And there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses.”¹⁰

God, and by implication earthly fathers, show love by causing pain and suffering.

The Catechism in the Confirmation rite (“That is to Say, an Instruction to Be Learned of Every Child before He Be Brought to Be Confirmed of the Bishop”)¹¹ contains a clear affirmation of hierarchical order and gives divine sanction to relationships of dominance and submission: “My duty . . . [to] honor and obey the king and his ministers. To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters.”¹²

All of this is true for both men and women. The further subordinate role of women is made clear in the marriage service.

The prayer book view of marriage combines Catholic and Reform traditions. Marriage is seen as divinely ordained for the procreation and nurture of children, as a remedy against sin and fornication, and for companionship, “the mutual society, help, and comfort, that one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.”¹³ The prayer for fertility is omitted when the woman is past childbirth, thus indicating that marriage and sexual relations are acceptable for reasons other than reproduction.¹⁴

⁸ Booty, BCP (1559), 316-23.

⁹ Booty, BCP (1559), 301.

¹⁰ Booty, BCP (1559), 302.

¹¹ Booty, BCP (1559), 183.

¹² Booty, BCP (1559), 286.

¹³ Booty, BCP (1559), 291.

¹⁴ Booty, BCP (1559), 296.

Male dominance and control is symbolized in the groom receiving the bride from her father or friend. Both partners promise to hold, love and cherish. The wife also promises to obey and serve.¹⁵

The wife's duty of obedience is emphasized in a homily that is to be read if there is no sermon. This begins with an exhortation on the duties of husbands to wives and wives to husbands based on Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 3. Women are encouraged to submit themselves to their husbands in all things. In addition, wives are told that they are responsible for the spiritual state of their husbands.

Let wives be subject to their own husbands, so that if any obey not the Word, they may be won without the Word, by the conversation (behavior) of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose apparel let it not be outward, with broided hair and trimming about with gold, either in putting on of gorgeous apparel, but let the hid man which is in the heart, be without all corruption, so that the spirit be mild and quiet, which is a precious thing in the sight of God.¹⁶

A companion book, the Ordinal, a book outlining "The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons," was a slight revision of the earlier 1549 and 1552 rites. These in turn were modeled on earlier medieval rituals.¹⁷ All reflect the traditional Catholic belief that authority in the church is based on apostolic succession reaching back from bishops through the apostles to Jesus, with the clerical orders of bishops, priests, and deacons derived from the practice of the early church. The Ordinal reflects Catholic tradition seeing ordination as a change in condition and nature that sets the clergy apart from the laity:

It is a sanctification of the person to do certain offices of religion. . . and also the imparting of grace to make the person meet to perform the same. The change of name adopted by St. Paul and St. Peter after their ordination expresses significantly the change of condition, the new honour sanctified by God. . . . The distinction between Clergy and lay persons is asserted by St. Chrysostom. . . . This distinction rests upon the impresssion of the indelible Ecclesisastical mark or

¹⁵ Booty, *BCP* (1559), 292.

¹⁶ Booty, *BCP* (1559), 298-99.

¹⁷ "Ordinal," *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1006.

character.¹⁸

The Reformation services reflect the new hierarchical structure, omitting the oath of allegiance to the Bishop of Rome, but including an oath of the king's supremacy. Deacons and priests promise to obey the bishop and other superiors. Bishops promise to correct and punish as necessary.¹⁹

Criteria for ordination include age, virtuous conversation, lack of criminal record, fluency in Latin, and knowledge of scripture. No direct mention is made of sex, but language ("Brethren") and choice of scripture, ("Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." and "A Bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.") implies that these are males.²⁰ This patriarchal picture is summed up in the charge to priests, "Consider yourselves the end of your Ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ."²¹

In a number of ways, the Book of Common Prayer (1559) promotes beliefs, values, and behaviors that would be seen as co-dependent today. The book's penitential tone seems to encourage feelings of guilt, shame, and unworthiness as normal and desirable Christian attitudes. In common with Reformation thought, there is a shift from the medieval view of collective sin ("We are fallen," that is dealt with through universal penitential mechanisms), to a focus on individual sin ("I am fallen; it's all my fault,") without the old religiously sanctioned methods of dealing with guilt. The burden of salvation shifts from the church to the individual. The increased sense of individual

¹⁸John H. Blunt, ed., The Annotated Book of Common Prayer, [Church of England] (New York: Dutton, 1883), 664-65. This structure reflects the traditional first century Mediterranean hierarchical world view. Tertullian compares the clerical/lay distinction within the church to Roman social classes. Thus ordination implies a change in class and in nature. (Karen Torjesen, Margo L. Goldsmith Associate Professor of Women's Studies in Religion, Claremont Graduate School, interview with author, 19 June 1990). This class distinction is reflected throughout medieval society and continues in the English Reformation in such institutions as separate law codes and courts for clerics and seats for Bishops in the House of Lords. (Jon Olson, Canon Theologian, Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and Adjunct Professor, School of Theology at Claremont, interview with author, 19 June 1990.)

¹⁹ Blunt, 680, 687, 699.

²⁰ Blunt, 678, 694.

²¹ Blunt, 686.

responsibility (“Everything depends on me”), coupled with unresolved guilt, effects self-esteem, feelings of responsibility, and the need to control self and others--all the major themes of co-dependency.²²

Traditional class and sex hierarchies are accepted and obedience to superiors is encouraged. There is an implied separation in class and nature between clergy and laity, with clergy seen as paternal authority figures and laity as subservient wives and children. In this system superiors exercise power directly through domination, inferiors through manipulation and other indirect means. On the positive side, the prayer book’s focus on education and the importance of congregational participation in the liturgy offers some hope for increasing empowerment of laity in the future.

Obedience, submission, and humility are desirable virtues for both sexes, and especially for women whose inferiority is taught with the traditional scriptural references. The dominance of males and inferiority of females is accepted as a given, a part of the divine order. In worship women see only male leaders, hear only male gender references to God and humans. This may be more apparent now that services are in English. All of this is taught in liturgical symbol and in word, seen and heard over and over again in the course of a lifetime. The effects on self-image must have been profound, especially for women.

The effects on family life seem mixed. On one, hand marriage is seen as honorable and sex within marriage is viewed positively. Mutual care, love, and companionship are emphasized. The nurture of children is encouraged. On the other, the old authoritarian, patriarchal structure is held up as the divinely ordered model for family relationships. Wives and children are to be obedient to the wise and powerful father. Suffering is glorified and the picture of an angry and vengeful God as a “Father,” who sends sickness and adversity and expresses love through chastisement and suffering, must have had serious implications for family relationships. There seems to be a sanction for the use of violence for education and control. This, coupled with the glorification of the patient acceptance of suffering and the emphasis on dominance and submission, provides fertile

²² Olson, interview.

ground for abuse and brutality in the family. The experience of abuse, plus the expectation that it will be patiently endured, and even rejoiced in, denies truth, destroys trust, and prohibits the expression of true feelings and perceptions. The process of co-dependency begins.

This is reinforced for women by their inferior status and relegation to the domestic sphere, which forces them to find supports for self-esteem in the relational roles of wife and mother. Women's responsibility for others is made explicit in the marriage service when women are told that they are responsible for the spiritual state of their husbands. Because of their subordinate status they must try to control others through indirect, manipulative means.

Thus the Book of Common Prayer (1559) affirms, teaches, and reinforces hierarchical, patriarchal values, attitudes, and behavior that form the basis for what is known today as co-dependency.

Richard Hooker

Hooker (1554-1600) was the major apologist for the Elizabethan Settlement. His major work, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, is an argument against Puritan critics rather than a systematic theology. However, it articulates important principles that still form the foundation for Anglican thought.

Intellectually, Hooker continues in the patristic and medieval philosophical tradition. He was familiar with the ideas of the continental reformers, but his thought is based primarily in Augustine, Aristotle, and Aquinas. He is not uncritical of this tradition, and he attempts to examine it in light of "changing times and circumstances," differentiating between what is essential and what is indifferent, what should be kept and what is not longer necessary to the faith, and interpreting the received theological tradition in contemporary language.²³

Hooker values knowledge ("There is in the world no kind of knowledge, whereby

²³ John Booty, "Richard Hooker," The Spirit of Anglicanism, ed. William J. Wolf (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), 3.

any part of truth is seen, but we justly account it precious”),²⁴ and uses reason to inform his understanding of scripture (“As a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the Scripture’s perfection that fruit and benefit which it yieldeth”),²⁵ thereby establishing the three fold source of authority--scripture, tradition, and reason--that continues to be used by Anglicans as a basis for theological and moral discourse.²⁶

His critique of received tradition does not appear to have included hierarchy and patriarchy, and he accepts the traditional Mediterranean-medieval world view as a self-evident part of the divine order. Like Aristotle and Aquinas, Hooker sees an orderly, authoritarian universe governed by an hierarchy of reasonable, God-given laws.²⁷ The human laws of church and state are based on the eternal and immutable “law whereby the Eternal himself doth work.”²⁸ Like Aquinas, he recognizes the law of nature, “that manner of working which God hath set for each created thing to keep,”²⁹ in the world around him, and accepts it without question: “See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the story of the whole world.”³⁰ This law is not found in detailed moral codes, but in basic principles that can be observed in the created order.³¹ Patriarchy is part of this divine order.

To fathers within their private families Nature hath given a supreme power; for which cause we see throughout the world even from the foundation thereof, all men have ever been taken as lords and lawful kings in their own houses.³²

Hooker not only accepts the inherent rightness of the patriarchal family but uses it

²⁴ Richard Hooker, “Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, The Third Book,” The Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 1, ed. John Keble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1836), 467, hereafter cited as “Third Book.”

²⁵ Hooker, “Third Book,” 468.

²⁶ William J. Wolf, “Anglicanism and It’s Spirit,” The Spirit of Anglicanism, ed. William J. Wolf (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), 151. Contemporary Anglicans often add experience as a fourth source of authority.

²⁷ Booty, “Richard Hooker,” 9-10, 37, 40.

²⁸ Richard Hooker, “Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, The First Book,” The Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 1, ed. John Keble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1836), 249, hereafter cited as “First Book.”

²⁹ Hooker, “First Book,” 256.

³⁰ Hooker, “First Book,” 258.

³¹ Booty, “Richard Hooker,” 23.

³² Hooker, “First Book,” 303.

as a model for civil government and priesthood.

That as the chiefest person in every household was always as if were a king, so when numbers of households joined themselves in civil society together, kings were the first kind of governors amongst them. Which is also (as it seemeth) the reason why the name of Father continued still in them, who of the fathers were made rulers . . . and being kings to exercise the office of priests, which fathers did at the first.³³

He later returns to this male referenced, patriarchal, father/family--clergy/church model in a discussion of the appropriate name for clergy.

For what are they that embrace the Gospel but sons of God? What are churches but his families? Seeing therefore we receive the adoptions and state of sons by their ministry whom God hath chosen out for that purpose, seeing also that when we are the sons of God, our continuance is still under their care which were our progenitors, what better title could there be given them than the reverend name of Presbyters or fatherly guides? . . . A presbyter according to the proper meaning of the New Testament is "he unto whom our Savior Christ hath communicated the power of spiritual procreation."³⁴

Hooker sees clerical authority coming directly from God and expressed in the sacraments.

The power of the ministry of God translateth out of darkness into glory, it raiseth men from the earth and bringeth God himself down from heaven, by blessing visible elements it maketh them invisible grace, it giveth daily the Holy Ghost."³⁵

He espouses the traditional view of the clerical order as a separate class with a distinctive nature. The "Order of God's Clergy" is opposite the the Order of the Laity.

The same power is in such not amiss both termed a kind of mark or character and acknowledged to be indelible. Ministerial power is a mark of separation, because it severeth them that have it from other men, and maketh them a special *order* consecrated unto the service of the Most High in things wherewith others may not meddle. Their difference therefore from other men is in that they are a distinct *order*. So Tertullian calleth them.³⁶

Hooker accepts hierarchical organization as appropriate for both church and state.

The English church and state are interdependent, and the responsibility of the church includes involvement in society.³⁷

³³ Hooker, "First Book," 303.

³⁴ Richard Hooker, "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, The Fifth Book," The Works of Richard Hooker, vol. 2, ed. John Keble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1836), 601-02, hereafter cited as "Fifth Book."

³⁵ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 581.

³⁶ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 581.

³⁷ Booty, "Richard Hooker," 13, 36.

Hooker's writing is androcentric. He appears to equate human nature with male nature, and does not discuss gender differences. Except for one brief reference in a discussion of church polity, Hooker specifically refers to women only in his discussions of the rites of marriage and the churching of women. From this discussion it is clear that he accepts the traditional view of women for the traditional reasons. Woman's purpose is assist man in procreation, "woman being created for man's sake to be his helper in regard to the end before mentioned, namely the having and the bringing up of children."³⁸ They are inferior, in part because it is impossible to have a relationship that is not hierarchical, "whereunto it was not possible they should concur unless there were subalternation between them, which subalternation is naturally grounded upon inequality, because things equal in every respect are never willingly directed one by another. . . ."³⁹ And on second thought women aren't equal anyway because of their secondary creation and inferior nature, "[W]oman therefore was even in her first estate framed by nature only after in time but inferior in excellency also unto man."⁴⁰ Here Hooker echoes Augustine and Aquinas, without further elaboration. His concluding statement, however, indicates a view and appreciation of women they might not have shared, "howbeit in so due and sweet proportion as being presented before our eyes, might be sooner perceived than defined."⁴¹

However attractive they may be, women, by reason of their weakness and sex, must be governed by men.

As for the delivering up of the woman either by her father or by some other, we must note that in ancient times all women which had not husbands nor fathers to govern them had their tutors, without whose authority there was no act they did warrantable. And for this cause they were in marriage delivered unto their husbands by others. Which custom retained hath still this use, that it putteth women in mind of a duty whereunto the very imbecility⁴² of their nature and sex doth bind them, namely to be always directed, guided, and ordered by others.⁴³

³⁸ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 544.

³⁹ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 544. Hooker uses this same argument in a discussion of hierarchy in the church, "Forasmuch as where the clergy are any great multitude, order doth necessarily require that by degrees they be distinguished . . . at least two sorts of ecclestical persons, the one subordinate unto the other." (Hooker, "Third Book," 523).

⁴⁰ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 544-45.

⁴¹ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 545.

⁴² In the sixteenth century "imbecile" meant, "weak, feeble; esp. feeble of body, physically weak or impotent." *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 55.

⁴³ Hooker, "Fifth Book," 547.

Here, Hooker supports his liturgical views with arguments based on tradition, custom and the traditional view of the nature of women and advocates the use of liturgical symbols to remind women of their inferior status.

While Hooker emphasizes the importance of reason, his writings do not reflect the traditional mind/body dichotomy. He affirms the goodness of God and creation, and sees sexuality as a part of the natural, divine order. Reproduction is a way for transient beings to imitate the eternal nature of God.

The first degree of goodness is that general perfection which all things do seek, in desiring the continuance of their being. All things therefore coveting as much as may be to be like unto God in being ever, that which cannot hereunto attain personally doth seek to continue itself another way, that is by offspring and propagation.⁴⁴

Sexual intercourse is acceptable as long as it occurs within marriage on non-penitential occasions.⁴⁵ He does not support a double standard, “unlawful copulation doth pollute and dishonour both parties.”⁴⁶

Hooker does not seem to value virginity or see women and their sexuality as unclean. In discussing the churching of women, he is emphatic in his assertion the woman is not unholy and this is not a purification, but rather a thanksgiving after the travail, grief, and danger of childbirth.⁴⁷

Hooker sees the procreation and the Christian nurture of children as the primary purpose of marriage and woman as created to assist in these functions.

[T]he replenishing first of earth with blessed inhabitants and then with saints everlasting praising God did depend upon conjunction of man and woman, he which made all things complete and perfect saw it could not be good to leave man without a helper unto the fore-alleged end.⁴⁸

Although he focuses on propagation, he also recognizes the importance of “conjugal honour and affection.”⁴⁹ He acknowledges a mutuality in the relationship, arguing that the

⁴⁴ Hooker, “First Book,” 268-69.

⁴⁵ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 446-47.

⁴⁶ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 550.

⁴⁷ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 553-56.

⁴⁸ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 544.

⁴⁹ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 551.

wedding ring should be retained as a symbol of “faith and fidelity . . . mutual love . . . the pledge of conjunction in heart and mind agreed upon between them.”⁵⁰ Unlike the Protestant reformers, he does not emphasize the family as a salvific agent or the training ground for government, but rather identifies religion and the church as the foundation for public good.⁵¹

Hooker says little about roles for women other than marriage and childrearing. He includes “deacons, women-church-servants or widows” in a list of scripturally authorized church officers, but does discuss this any further.⁵² In general, women and their nature do not seem to be a problematic area for Hooker. His interest lies elsewhere. Where he does mention women, he seems to accept traditional views without elaboration or comment. He does not speculate on their nature or discuss their virtues or appropriate behavior. He does not seem especially suspicious or hostile to women, he simply accepts their inferiority and the cultural status quo.

Hooker affirms the importance of external order and control, but accepts emotions as natural, stating that people are responsible not for the emotions themselves, but for how they react to them. Responses, as all actions, should be guided by right reason--reason based in knowledge and will.⁵³

A key concept in Hooker’s theology, that of participation, offers a positive view of human nature and suggests a new model for relationships. In the incarnation God changed human nature.

God hath deified our nature, though not by turning it into himself, yet by making it his own inseparable habitation, we cannot now conceive how God should without man either exercise divine power, or receive the glory of divine presence. For man is in both an associate of Deity.⁵⁴

For Hooker the persons in union, whether in the trinity or in divine/human union, remain

⁵⁰ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 548. However, since women are no longer bought and sold, the custom of “laying down money” at a wedding should be abandoned.

⁵¹ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 17-18.

⁵² Hooker, “Third Book,” 522.

⁵³ Hooker, “First Book,” 275-80.

⁵⁴ Hooker, “Fifth Book,” 301.

distinct individuals. Thus relationship involves both individuation and participation.⁵⁵

In those areas most closely related to co-dependency some of Hooker's ideas are similar to those of Augustine, Aquinas, and the continental reformers, others are different. He is influenced by their ideas, but is also a man of his time and place who seems to reflect the openness and optimism of Elizabethan England.

He uncritically accepts the traditional patriarchal world-view and continues to legitimize and perpetuate many of its co-dependency related tendencies. He is interested in control issues and believes social order can only be maintained through the dominant/submissive relationships inherent in hierarchical structures.

He accepts gender hierarchy and the natural inferiority of women, who are to be ruled by men. Like all male theologians, Hooker sees males as normative; females are of secondary interest. He sees them from a male point of view as possibly attractive companions and a necessary adjunct for procreation and child rearing. He does not seem suspicious or hostile to women, but nevertheless he contributes to women's low self-esteem by accepting the inferiority of their nature and their subordinate status. Perhaps most damaging, he advocates the use of a liturgical symbol to teach and reinforce women's sense of inferiority.

He accepts and supports the patriarchal family with all its tendencies toward co-dependence, but does not emphasize authoritarian practices or discuss the use or toleration of violence and abuse. His most problematic legacy may be his use of the patriarchal family model to describe the church and the relationship of priest to parish, thus transferring all the co-dependency producing dynamics of the patriarchal family into the parish community.

Hooker does make several contributions that are potentially useful in counteracting Christian tendencies toward fostering co-dependency. Two of these come from his concept of participation. The first of these is his incarnational focus that emphasizes the goodness of God reflected in the goodness of creation including human nature. This acceptance of goodness of the physical world--beauty and earthiness of life--has continued to be an

⁵⁵ Booty, "Richard Hooker," 17-20.

important theme in Anglicanism, and is potentially useful in increasing self-esteem and promoting self-acceptance. Likewise, exploration of his model of relationship, involving both differentiation and unity, individuation and participation, may provide useful alternatives to the dysfunction relationships characteristic of co-dependency.

Perhaps Hooker's most important contribution lies in his methodology. His argument is calm and reasoned. He avoids extremes and seeks the "via media." His distinction between essential and unnecessary elements of tradition and his appeal to reason, tradition, and scripture as sources of authority combines continuity with the past with openness to change and the flexibility to respond to contemporary conditions and issues.

The Thirty-Nine Articles

The Thirty-Nine Articles (1571) are not a doctrinal statement or creed, but rather a set of doctrinal formulae that attempt to define the Church of England's position on various controversial issues of the time.⁵⁶ They tend to be an expression of the Protestant party and are heavily influenced by Luther and Calvin. The ninth article, with its negative view of human nature and sexuality and its emphasis on God's anger and punishment, seems related to the issues of self-esteem and patriarchal violence involved in co-dependency.

IX. Of Original or birth-Sin.

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam . . . but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh . . . (which some do expound, the wisdom, some sensuality, some the desire of the flesh), is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess that cupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.⁵⁷

Sermons

In the sixteenth century, sermons were an important form of social control. Clergy were political appointees, and their sermons were often more influenced by social and

⁵⁶ "Thirty-nine Articles, The," Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1368.

⁵⁷ Oliver O'Donovan, On the Thirty-Nine Articles (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), 139.

political factors than by theological considerations. Sermons endorse the status quo, supporting hierarchical government and class structure and teaching that attempts to change the social order were blasphemous.⁵⁸

The “Book of Homilies” was issued by the government to be used by clergy who were considered unfit to preach their own sermons. One of these sermons addresses the dangers of “Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion.”

What an abominable sin against God and man rebellion is, and how dreadfully the wrath of God is kindled and inflamed against all rebels, and what horrible plagues, punishments, and deaths, and finally, eternal damnation, doth hang over their heads: as how, on the contrary part, good and obedient subjects are in God’s favour.⁵⁹

Women must remember their proper place in the gender hierarchy. In Lent 1550, Hugh Latimer reminds them of this.

Many women . . . rule their husbands, and do all things after their own minds. They do therein against the order by God appointed them: they break their injunction that God gave unto them . . . God saith . . . “thou shalt be subject under the power of thy husband.” Thou shalt be subject. Women are subjects; ye be subjects to your husbands. At the first, the man and the woman were equal, But after that she had given credit to the serpent, then she had an injunction set upon her . . . it is part of your penance to be subjects unto your husbands: ye are underlings, underlings, and must be obedient.⁶⁰

The themes are familiar from Augustine and Aquinas: gender hierarchy is ordained by God; women are inferior, forever condemned to subservience because of their role in the fall; obedience, not leadership, is the appropriate female virtue. Latimer is not hopeful that his message will be heeded: “I know by experience that many will not be ruled by their husbands, as they ought to be, I have been desired to exhort some, and with some I could do little in that matter.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Paul A. Welsby, ed., introduction to *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 14–15.

⁵⁹ Book of Homilies, “The Third Part of the Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion,” *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology*, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 53.

⁶⁰ Hugh Latimer, “Last Sermon Preached before King Edward the Sixth,” *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology*, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 42.

⁶¹ Latimer, 43.

A related theme centers on the “undesirable attire” of vain and insolent women.⁶²

Preaching in the reign of Henry VIII, Roger Edgeworth is alarmed by women’s use of cosmetics. His argument reflects old concerns about female chastity, male control of female sexuality, and women’s invasion of the male territory of public space.

And I shall advertise all married men, and all them that have daughters to keep . . . that you suffer them not to use it because it is not godly . . . and also because of the peril that may come of it, For when they set themselves forth so curiously, and goeth abroad in the streets . . . it is not you alone that would have to look upon them, it is not you alone that is pleased with the sight of them, it is not you alone that casteth their eyes after them, or that draweth long sighs of carnal love after them, this is not the way to keep them for yourselves.⁶³

Another sermon from the “Book of Homilies,” echoing the Church Fathers, identifies two types of women (and worries about the distinction between them) and sees women as responsible for male chastity as well as their own.

The proud and haughty stomach of the daughters of England are so maintained with divers disguised sorts of costly apparel, that, as Tertullian, and ancient father, saith, there is left no difference in apparel between an honest matron and a common strumpet . . . and such attires be but to provoke her to show herself abroad, to entice others. . . . What else dost thou, but settest out thy pride, and makest of the undecent apparel of thy body, the devil’s net, to catch the soul of them which behold thee? O thou woman, not a Christian . . . thou minister of the devil.⁶⁴

Summary

The English Reformation is not characterized by sudden a transformation dominated by a great reforming figure or a comprehensive confessional statement. Rather its form is worked out gradually over time, in palace and cathedral, in argument and disputation and dialogue, as a compromise gradually takes place. Its energy and confusion and turmoil are mirrored in the messages it gives. Many of the co-dependency producing factors in Western Christianity continue while others begin to improve. Some sources emphasize the wrath of God and the utter depravity of human nature, while others write about the goodness of God reflected in all creation.

⁶² Welsby, introduction, 14.

⁶³ Roger Edgeworth, untitled sermon, *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology*, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 51.

⁶⁴ Book of Homilies, “The Sermon Against Excess of Apparel,” *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology*, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 60-62.

Church and state worry about control. Traditional, oppressive hierarchical structures are supported as the will of God, and the model of the patriarchal family is used to describe church and state. Domestic violence is at least tacitly encouraged and denial of reality and emotions is advocated. Women and the lower orders are reminded of their inferior status in sermon and liturgy.

At the same time an ethos is emerging that values dialogue and compromise, that avoids extremes and is able to hold conflicting viewpoints in often uneasy--sometimes creative--tension; an ethos that seeks involvement with the society around it and makes adaptation to social change possible by basing its authority in a balance of tradition, scripture, reason, and experience. All of this lays the foundation for subsequent Anglican thought.

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Introduction

English Christianity in the seventeenth and eighteenth century reflects the social and political issues of the time. The constitutional conflicts of the seventeenth century are mirrored in the struggles between Puritans and Anglicans for control of the Church of England. The problems engendered by the emerging industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century give rise to the Evangelical and Methodist movements.

The established church that emerges in the Restoration continues the Anglican tradition in England and the English colonies. As dissenting groups break away and toleration increases it remains the state church, but is no longer a national church in the old sense that all citizens belong and are exposed to its teaching. However, its status as the established church does mean that it will continue to have a profound influence on English society.

In America, the Church of England is the established church in some colonies until the Revolution, when Anglicanism loses its official status and becomes one of many denominations in the pluralism of the American religious scene. However, perhaps because it is perceived as having wealthy and influential members, it has retained a sense of "establishment" and has tended to exert an influence far beyond its numbers. Eighteenth

century American Anglicanism, like American society, is affected by both rationalism and revivalism, and the church includes high church focus on liturgical piety and the sacraments, evangelical stress on individual salvation and personal religion, and latitudinarian emphasis on reason.⁶⁵

When the church is reestablished in England, the hierarchical, episcopal form of church government and the Book of Common Prayer, both of which had been eliminated in the Commonwealth, are restored. The Book of Common Prayer (1662) and its derivative, the American Book of Common Prayer (1789), again become a major expression of the Anglican ethos. These, along with the devotional writings of Jeremy Taylor and William Law and selected sermons, provide insights into concerns of the period especially related to co-dependency.

Book of Common Prayer (1662 and 1798)

The Book of Common Prayer (1662) is a revision of the 1559 prayer book. The changes are minor and largely unrelated to co-dependency. In the Litany the old reference to “Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers” is changed to “Bishops, Priests, and Deacons,” thus explicitly returning to the traditional hierarchical order. In the marriage service “children’s children unto ye 3d and 4th generation,” becomes “children christianly and virtuously brought up.” The charge to the wife to be “loving and amiable to her husband as Rachel, wise as Rebecca, faithful and obedient as Sara” is shortened to “amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband.”⁶⁶ These small changes continue the emphases on the nurture of children and the obedience and submission of wives.

The minimal changes in the Ordinal are designed to eliminate various Puritan interpretations and strengthen hierarchical distinctions. Now it is clear that bishop and priest are separate orders, that ordination by bishops is essential for ministry in the Church of England, and that the pastoral, or ruling function lies with bishops.⁶⁷

The Book of Common Prayer (1662) was used by the American church until the

⁶⁵ Byron D. Stuhlman, Eucharistic Celebration, 1789-1979 (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1988), 49.

⁶⁶ Blunt, 38-39.

⁶⁷ Paul F. Bradshaw, The Anglican Ordinal (London: SPCK, 1971), 91, 95.

revolution. The new prayer book adopted by the General Convention of the American Church in 1789 was based on the old English book and portions of the Scottish prayer book, with modernized language and some minor revisions. Some reflect emerging democratic ideals. Prayers for the king are replaced with petitions for American civil leaders. Duplications, repetitions, and archaic language are deleted and prayers and options are added. Some exhortations and condemnatory expressions are omitted.⁶⁸ The marriage rite is shortened. The “causes for which Matrimony was ordained” is eliminated from the opening exhortation and the groom no longer says, “With my body I thee worship,” when giving the ring.⁶⁹ The catechism is essentially unchanged and the basic beliefs and values expressed in the liturgy remain the same.⁷⁰

The preface to the American book states that it does not intend “to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship.”⁷¹ This prayer book managed to balance many conflicting viewpoints, and was a unifying and stabilizing force in the American church for the next one hundred years.⁷² Unlike the English church where the Book of Common Prayer (1662) has remained unaltered as the official service book, the American prayer book has a history of additions and revisions, beginning with the addition of an ordinal in 1792 and a service for the consecration of a church in 1799.⁷³

Jeremy Taylor

Taylor (1613-1667), an important Anglican bishop and writer, is now best known for his devotional writing, which has been described as, “Characteristic expressions of Anglican spirituality in their balanced sobriety and their insistence on a well-ordered piety which stresses temperance and moderation in all things.”⁷⁴ His classic, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, provides insight into seventeenth century Anglican spirituality and ethics. His discussions of the virtues of chastity and humility and the duty of

⁶⁸ Stuhlman, 64-68.

⁶⁹ Marion J. Hatchett, Commentary on the American Prayer Book (New York: Seabury, 1980), 430.

⁷⁰ Marion J. Hatchett, The Making of the First American Book of Common Prayer (New York: Seabury, 1982), 80, 125, 144.

⁷¹ Blunt, 42.

⁷² Hatchett, Making of the First American Book of Common Prayer, 147.

⁷³ Stuhlman, 95.

⁷⁴ “Taylor, Jeremy,” Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1343.

obedience are especially relevant to co-dependence.

In his discussion of the duty “Of Obedience to our Superiors,” Taylor endorses the class and gender hierarchy embedded in Western culture, and bases rules of conduct on biblical admonitions to obey civil and ecclesiastical governors. Authority is God given and those in authority have a special nature: “Consider that all authority descends from God, and our superiors bear the image of the divine power, which God imprints on them as on an image of clay.”⁷⁵ Obedience bring personal and social peace. Duties of rulers and subjects are reciprocal.⁷⁶

This principle is also true in the family hierarchy. Children must obey parents. Parents are to be “tender-bowelled, pitiful, and gentle, complying with all the infirmities of the children, and in their several ages proportioning to them several usages according to their needs and capacities.”⁷⁷ They must provide Christian nurture, education, vocational preparation, and suitable mates for their children.⁷⁸ Similar reciprocity extends to masters and servants and to husbands and wives.⁷⁹

Husbands are to give “their wives love, maintenance, duty, and the sweetnesses of conversation; and wives must pay to them all they have, or can, with the interest of obedience and reverence. . . . The husband must rule over his wife, as the soul does over the body.”⁸⁰ All goods should be held in common, “so marriage may be a mixture of interests, of bodies, of minds, of friends, a conjunction of the whole life, and the noblest of friendships.”⁸¹

Taylor values chastity which he defines as “the suppression of all irregular desires in the matter of sensual or carnal pleasure. . . .”⁸² and the related virtues of modesty and

⁷⁵ Jeremy Taylor, 134.

⁷⁶ Jeremy Taylor, 134-38.

⁷⁷ Jeremy Taylor, 142.

⁷⁸ Jeremy Taylor, 142-43.

⁷⁹ Jeremy Taylor, 144.

⁸⁰ Jeremy Taylor, 143.

⁸¹ Jeremy Taylor, 144.

⁸² Jeremy Taylor, 60.

purity.⁸³ He values both abstinence (in virgins and widows) and continence (in marriage), the latter defined as conjugal affection, unbroken faith, education of children in the fear of God, “patience and contentedness and holy thoughts, and the exercise of virtues proper to that state.”⁸⁴ He thus extends the traditional female virtues of chastity, modesty, purity, patience, and faithfulness to include both sexes. However his description of “effeminate” as “sneaking, soft, and foolish, without courage, without confidence,” would seem to indicate a certain ambivalence about female nature.⁸⁵

Sex in marriage is permissible for procreation, to avoid fornication, “to lighten and ease the cares, and sadnesses of household affairs, or to endear each other,” but never for pleasure alone or at times of solemn devotion.⁸⁶ In fornication and adultery, the dishonor does not rest with the woman’s family or spouse but with her partner in the illicit act. Taylor rejects a double standard and feels that the man is more at fault than the woman, “who is of a more pliant and easy spirit, and weaker understanding, and hath nothing to supply the unequal strengths of men but the defensative of a passive nature and armour of modesty, which is the natural ornament of that sex.”⁸⁷ The effects of the woman’s adultery are worse, “bringing bastardy into a family,” effecting inheritance, causing emotional and legal problems. But adultery is equally wrong in both male and female.

Virginity seems to apply only to women, and is characterized by “a singular modesty,” sexual ignorance, pious and holy thoughts, acts of charity, and a “retired and unpublic” life.⁸⁸ Widowhood, again a female state, should exhibit similar virtues, especially since their “desires hath been opened by the former permissions of the marriage-bed.” She must not remarry until is she sure she is not pregnant by her former husband.⁸⁹

⁸³ The introduction to his discussion of chastity reveals an unexpected modesty: “Reader, stay, and read not the advices of the following section, unless thou hast a chaste spirit, or desirest to be chaste, or at least art apt to consider whether you ought or no. For there are some spirits so atheistical, and some so wholly possessed with a spirit of uncleanness, that they turn the most prudent and chaste discourses into dirt and filthy apprehensions.” Jeremy Taylor, 59.

⁸⁴ Jeremy Taylor, 62.

⁸⁵ Jeremy Taylor, 62.

⁸⁶ Jeremy Taylor, 68-70.

⁸⁷ Jeremy Taylor, 64.

⁸⁸ Jeremy Taylor, 66-67.

⁸⁹ Jeremy Taylor, 69-70.

Humility, “the great ornament and jewel of Christian religion,” is based on the example of Jesus.⁹⁰ His “humble man” would be called co-dependent today.

The humble man trusts not to his own discretion, but in matters of concernment relies rather upon the judgment of his friends, counsellors, or spiritual guides. He does not pertinaciously pursue the choice of his own will, but in all things lets God choose for him, and his superiors in those things which concern them. He does not murmur against commands. He is not inquisitive into the reasonableness of indifferent and innocent commands, but believes their command to be reason enough in such cases to exact his obedience. He lives according to a rule, and with compliance to public customs. . . . He is meek and indifferent in all accidents and chances. He patiently bears injuries. He is always unsatisfied in his own conduct, resolutions, and counsels.⁹¹

Although the male pronoun is used, this ideal apparently applies to both sexes and must have created problems for both men and women. These values and behavior would likely be reinforced for women because they coincide with traditional cultural expectations for the female role. Men might experience difficulty because they conflict with the accepted male gender role. In both cases they are a recipe for what is known as co-dependency today.

Taylor is not a misogynist and he recommends the traditional female virtues of chastity, purity, and modesty to both sexes. However, he echoes traditional beliefs about the inferiority of female nature. Men are responsible decision makers, women are pliant and passive, weaker in body and intellect. His discussion of female sexuality reflects ancient patriarchal concerns about the legitimacy of heirs and inheritance.

Taylor’s teaching about authority and family has both positive and negative implications for co-dependence. He affirms patriarchy and hierarchy and sees relationships in terms of superiority and inferiority, emphasizing obedience and submission. But he does not see authority as absolute, and stresses reciprocity and the duties of superiors to inferiors. He is very concerned about order--in the social system and in individual lives.

He accepts the traditional patriarchal family, with ruling husband and obedient wife and children, but his stress is on the care and nurture of children and mutuality in husband-

⁹⁰ Jeremy Taylor, 73.

⁹¹ Jeremy Taylor, 85-86.

wife relationships. His description of marriage sounds more like a relationship between equals than one of dominance and submission. Women can be true friends and worthwhile companions. The potential for enmeshment is there, but there is little sense in Taylor of one spouse being incomplete without the other.

Taylor does not advocate violence. His child-rearing advice sounds surprisingly modern with its emphasis on gentleness and attention to individual and developmental differences. His advice to wives of adulterers, "If she thinks to be separated by reason of her husband's unchaste life, let her consider that then the man will be incurably ruined, and her rivals could wish nothing more than they might possess him alone," has both positive and negative aspects.⁹² He does not excuse the husband or counsel patience or passive acceptance of abuse, but he does suggest that women are responsible for their husbands' behavior and reputation, and need relationships so much that they may wish to put up with demeaning situations.

William Law

Law's classic, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, has had a profound impact on the spiritual life of Anglicanism and on the wider Christian community.⁹³ Both his saintly life and his writing challenged the values of his "worldly and rationalistic age," deeply affecting such disparate folk as Dr. Johnson and John Wesley, Anglican high churchmen and Quakers.⁹⁴

In his discussion of ascetic and moral life he uses both female and male characters as positive and negative examples and attributes similar virtues and vices to both sexes, although they may be worked out differently in different life circumstances. Women of all classes are "to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, to adorn themselves in modest apparel, shamefacedness, and sobriety," and "to attend at the worship and service of God."⁹⁵

Women are confined to traditional roles of wife or virgin.

Young ladies must either devote themselves to piety, prayer, self-denial, and all

⁹² Jeremy Taylor, 144.

⁹³ William Law, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden, and Welsh, n. d.). Law lived from 1686 to 1761.

⁹⁴ Law, 5-6.

⁹⁵ Law, 98.

good works, in a virgin state of life; or else marry, to be holy, sober, and prudent in the care of a family, bringing up their children in piety, humility, and devotion, and abounding in all other good works, to the utmost of their state and capacity. They have no choice of anything else, but must devote themselves to God in one of these states.⁹⁶

Law sees women as “naturally qualified to be great examples of piety” and is concerned about the triviality of their education.

It is, therefore, much to be lamented, that this sex, on whom so much depends, who have the first forming both of our bodies and our minds, are not only educated in pride, but in the silliest and most contemptible part of it.⁹⁷

He recognizes the limitations of women’s educational opportunities and makes a surprising statement about their capabilities, “They are not indeed suffered to dispute with us the proud prizes of arts and sciences, of learning and eloquence, in which I have much suspicion they would often prove our superiors,” and laments the misdirection of their education, “but we turn them over to the study of beauty and dress, and the whole world conspires to make them think of nothing else.”⁹⁸

He recognizes that what is traditionally viewed as women’s nature may be a result of social conditioning.

The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind seem to consider them in no other view than as so many painted idols, that are to allure and gratify their passions; so that if many women are vain, light gewgaw creatures, they have this to excuse themselves, that they are not only such as their education has made them to be, but such as the generality of the world allows them to be.

It is generally said that women are naturally of little and vain minds; but this I look upon to be as false and unreasonable, as to say that butchers are naturally cruel; for, as their cruelty is not owing to their nature, but to their way of life, which has changed their nature; so whatever littleness and vanity is to be observed in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of butchers, a temper that is wrought into them by that life which they are taught and accustomed to lead.⁹⁹

Law would seem to have both a positive and negative influence in areas related to co-dependency. He is not greatly concerned with social control, but his emphasis on the personal piety could lead to exaggerated ideas of personal responsibility and guilt. He

⁹⁶ Law, 97.

⁹⁷ Law, 204.

⁹⁸ Law, 204.

⁹⁹ Law, 205.

challenges eighteenth-century values and advocates the virtues of humility, charity, chastity, and devotion for both men and women. Although he seems to accept traditional views about hierarchy and gender roles, he questions cultural assumptions about woman's nature, suggesting that many traditional female attributes may be the result of social conditioning rather inherent nature. This fresh viewpoint and willingness to engage in serious social criticism may be his greatest contribution.

Sermons

Seventeenth and eighteenth-century sermons continued to support the basic structure of society, while addressing certain social problems. Several of these have implications for co-dependency.

In one, John Tillotson (1630-1694), an Archbishop of Canterbury and famous preacher, discusses childrearing.¹⁰⁰ Children are to be obedient, modest, diligent, sincere, tender, just, honest, sober, temperate, and pious. Parents must maintain their authority over children, and fear of shame and disgrace are seen as important weapons against sin and vice. Children are to be silent, especially in the presence of their betters. Self control is important. Passions, especially desire, fear, and anger are to be controlled and all sensual appetites and bodily pleasures governed. Tillotson does not differentiate between male and female children. He emphasizes teaching, and does not refer to corporal punishment. This is positive. His emphasis on authority, obedience, shame, silence, and control of emotions and desires is less so and encourages co-dependent like behavior.

The eighteenth century saw the founding of many charitable institutions. Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) preached at the anniversary of one founded "for the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes."¹⁰¹ In it he underlines the importance of female chastity, "This principle appears indeed to have been well understood and very generally adopted in the policy of all civilized nations; in which the preservation of female chastity, in all ages and in all parts of the world, hath been an object of prime concern." He notes the general success of the European system, "of releasing our women from the restraints imposed upon them

¹⁰⁰ John Tillotson, "Sermon on the Education of Children," Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 142-48.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Horsley, "Sermon Preached on the Anniversary of the Institution of the Magdalen Hospital," Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 194-96.

by the jealousy of Eastern manners: but under this indispensable condition, that the female, in whatever rank, who once abuses her liberty to bring a stain upon her character, shall from that moment be consigned to indelible disgrace, and expelled for the whole remainder of her life from the society of the virtuous of her own sex.”¹⁰²

Horsley expresses general approval of this position, but notes several problems: the double standard that punishes the woman but not the man and the “almost insurmountable obstacle to her return into the paths of virtue and sobriety.”¹⁰³ He advocates mercy and rehabilitation—albeit in a patronizing way. He notes a social problem, but does not attempt to deal with its roots. The control of female sexuality remains a major interest of male society and women are still responsible for imaging shame, and thus especially vulnerable to co-dependency producing feelings of guilt and inferiority.

Summary

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are a time of both continuity and change in co-dependency related factors. Family and church continue to be patriarchal, hierarchical institutions. Dominance and submission based on class and gender are endorsed, but are now increasingly expressed in terms of benevolent paternalism rather than stern authoritarianism.

Social order is still important, but the agency of control is moving from external authority to individual self-control of emotion and action. This, coupled with the emphasis on individual piety with its view of humility as self-abasement and individual responsibility for sin can predispose to repression of feelings and perceptions, poor self-image and feelings of shame and guilt.

Persons in authority continue to be seen as a separate class with separate characteristics. Woman is still seen as inferior, with a passive, weak, compliant, sensitive nature. Because of this she may be especially fitted for piety and devotion. At the same time, there are indications that male and female nature may not be totally distinct. Similar virtues are advocated for both sexes and all classes, although their expression may be different. Female chastity is important to insure legitimate inheritance, but some writers

¹⁰² Horsley, 194-95.

¹⁰³ Horsley, 195.

begin to question a double standard of sexual morality.

Upper class women are encouraged to engage in works of charity outside the home, but otherwise women's roles continue to be limited to the private world of home, family, and friends--still forcing a focus on relationships as a source of self-worth. Little is said about the impact of the industrial revolution on lower class women and children. The ideal family is still patriarchal, but there is an emphasis on mutuality and companionship. Child rearing advice centers on education and nurture. There is little to excuse or encourage domestic violence. The recognition of individual and developmental differences has the potential for encouraging more sensitive adult-child relationships. Perhaps the most unexpected and interesting development is Law's suggestion that perceived women's nature may be the result of social conditioning.

Throughout these centuries the church continues its long history of accepting rather than questioning the basic social system. But the mounting pressures of industrialization and secularization are forcing changes in both society and church that will have implications for patriarchal institutions and their encouragement of co-dependent attitudes and behaviors.

CHAPTER 4

Co-dependency and Patriarchy in the Anglican Tradition: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Introduction

As the rate of social change gains momentum in nineteenth and twentieth centuries the gap between the traditional patriarchal world-view rooted in classical and medieval cultures and emerging political and intellectual concepts becomes more apparent. The resulting tension presents a challenge to both church and society. As Anglicanism responds, however reluctantly, its close relationship to the society is both a liability and an asset. While it tends to accept and reinforce the status quo as long as possible, its positive attitude toward learning, openness to new ideas, and ability to encompass a variety of viewpoints does allow for some degree of change. Some of these changes have implications for co-dependence.

Nineteenth Century

Introduction

In the nineteenth century the processes of industrialization and urbanization continue their profound influence on English society. Despite increased secularization, politics and religion are still closely inter-related and major social reform movements, such as the abolition of the slave trade, grow out of religious convictions. Greater toleration leads to growing religious plurality, with the Church of England continuing to influence society from its position as the established church.

Society is still a class and gender hierarchy, with power exercised by socially dominant males. The pervasive ideal of the Victorian domestic family emphasizes male leadership and female self-sacrifice and service. The established Anglican church supports this ideology, which is beginning to be criticized by a growing feminist movement and challenged by changing social conditions.¹

What is true of Britain also tends to be true of the nineteenth-century United States,

¹ Gail Malmgreen, ed., introduction to Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930 (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 3-4.

especially the East and South where the Episcopal church is concentrated. While America has a more fluid class structure, the influence of a race based hierarchy is more pervasive. The pluralism of the American religious scene makes Anglicans there less influential in society as a whole than is true in England.

In both Britain and the United States the Victorian age accepts ancient Western patriarchal values and modifies them in some ways before passing them on to influence twentieth century culture. The following discussion will describe certain aspects of this process, using selected authors of the period and modern commentators to give an overview of the nineteenth-century Anglican church and then explore two areas especially relevant to co-dependency—Victorian family ideology and the nature and status of women and their role in the Anglican church.

The Anglican Church

In the nineteenth century, the static rationalism and progressive decline of religious life in the Church of England was challenged by new religious movements. The first of these, the Evangelical movement, was influenced by Methodism and was part of the Protestant wing of Anglicanism. It began in the late eighteenth century in an effort to “bring reality into religion when a low tone pervaded English life and many clergy were negligent and worldly.”² Evangelicals emphasized the importance of scripture, individual conversion, salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ, personal piety, and social responsibility. They were active in domestic and foreign missionary activity and social reform, working to eliminate the slave trade, enact labor laws to protect women and children, provide low cost housing for the poor, prevent cruelty to animals, and promote temperance and strict observation of the sabbath.³

The Anglo-Catholic movement began in the 1830s and sought to restore seventeenth-century high church ideals to the Church of England, emphasizing solid learning and holiness, apostolic succession, the Church of England as a continuation of the

² “Evangelicalism,” *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 486.

³ See J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3rd ed. (London: A. and C. Black, 1986), 308-22; and Walter Arnstein, “Queen Victoria and Religion,” *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, ed. Gail Malmgreen (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 90-97.

medieval church, and the Book of Common Prayer as a rule of faith. Anglo-Catholics returned their parishes to richness of decoration and ceremony and revived religious orders and such practices as veneration of saints, making the sign of the cross, and private confession. They were active in slum parishes and were especially interested in education, working closely with universities and supporting educational reform.⁴

There were frequent disputes between Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics in the nineteenth century. Both continue to be important parties in the modern Church of England and have had profound influence on the American Episcopal church.⁵

A third movement, Christian Socialism, has not persisted as a distinct party, but its influence has spread throughout Anglicanism. Christian Socialism was founded by Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1897) whose christocentric theology emphasizes God's creation and redemption of all humankind in Christ, rather than sin and the fall. Maurice is interested in the relationship between theology and society and his commitment to the redemption of society grew out of his belief that all human life must be an expression of Christ's redemption and his concern for the social implications of the gospel. He was inclusive, believing that Christ's kingdom embraced all people with no distinctions based on wealth, power, or social class.⁶

Other forces of change were at work in the church. Biblical criticism, imported from Germany in 1828, began to influence Anglican scholarship.⁷ As a result of missionary activity the first black Anglican bishop was ordained in 1851.⁸ In 1867, the growing international nature of Anglicanism is reflected in the initiation of the Lambeth Conferences, assemblies of bishops of the Anglican Communion under the leadership of the Archbishop of

⁴ See Moorman, 324-328; Arnstein, 98-100; and "Oxford Movement, The," Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1019-20.

⁵ In liturgy and worship the American church tended toward an Anglo-Catholic position. The revised American Book of Common Prayer (1892) reflects the high church view of the church as an instrument of divine grace as well as its concern with the esthetics of worship as seen in the return to medieval architecture, ornamental vestments, and ceremonial. Stuhlman, 76, 81-95.

⁶ Moorman, 356; and Wolf, William J. "Frederick Denison Maurice," The Spirit of Anglicanism, ed. William J. Wolf (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), 49-98.

⁷ Moorman, 328-29.

⁸ Arnstein, 95.

Canterbury.⁹ These conferences have continued to be held about every ten years to discuss issues of mutual concern, and while their statements are not authoritative, they often reflect the mind of the worldwide Anglicanism.

The Victorian Family

The patriarchal family, with its associated ideals of male authority and female submissiveness, always a part of Anglican tradition, assumes an extremely important role in Victorian middle-class culture. An early nineteenth-century preacher, Sydney Smith, describes the ideal, well-ordered family of the time:

The provident activity of a father; a mother breathing peace, and gentleness, and goodness, over all; the youthful ardor of children, their pleasant ways, their graceful shame, and their fondness, the recompense of amiable patience; then, that wise regularity which a family exhibits, that conspiracy of views and interest, and the strength of that affection which nature teaches, and man allows and applauds. When human beings are thus gathered together, every good man wished to them happiness and peace: they affect our feelings, they satisfy our reason, they call down our blessing and our prayers!¹⁰

The paternalism of such a family could be stifling for women and children. It is no wonder that Florence Nightingale is quoted as saying, “I know nothing like the petty grinding tyranny of a good English family.”¹¹

Like Hooker, nineteenth-century Anglicans saw the patriarchal family as the model for the church. Maurice referred to the church as a “Christian family.”¹² He wrote, “I claim it as the first and noblest distinction of our Prayers, that they set out with assuming God to be a Father, and those that worship him to be his children.”¹³

Evangelicals supported the Victorian family ideology while Anglo-Catholicism was viewed by many as a threat to accepted patriarchal family values and paternal authority. The practice of eliminating family pews (a sign of class) and separating the sexes for worship (no longer recognizing fathers of families), was seen as undermining hierarchical

⁹ “Lambeth Conferences,” *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 795.

¹⁰ Sydney Smith, “On the Sin of Adultery,” *Sermons and Society: An Anglican Anthology*, ed. Paul A. Welsby, 215-16.

¹¹ Quoted in John S. Reed, “‘A Female Movement’: The Feminization of Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Catholicism,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 57 (1988): 233.

¹² Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Prayer Book* (London: James Clarke, n. d.), 28.

¹³ Maurice, 5.

distinctions and suggesting an authority higher than the pater familias. Sentiments, such as those expressed by an Anglo-Catholic priest: "We are not to be thinking here of our families but of God, the Father of us all. Here let us know ourselves only in the God-given order of sons and daughters of the Everlasting," were seen as a threats to the traditional patriarchal family.¹⁴

The revival of private confession was especially unsettling to Victorian society because it combined a threat to parental authority with perceived threats to purity and innocence.

Again and again, preachers and pamphlet-writers told Englishmen of the dangers to their womenfolk and to themselves, should the women resort to confession. Many of the appeals amounted to candid warnings that male privilege was threatened . . . the belief that it as an attempt to undermine the authority of husbands and fathers and to destroy the patriarchal structure of the Victorian family.¹⁵

Perhaps this challenge to Victorian values accounts in part for the disproportionate support Anglo-Catholicism received from culturally subordinate and oppressed groups, including women.¹⁶

Role of Women

In the early nineteenth century the role of middle and upper-class women is very limited. Woman's destiny is inseparably linked to the Victorian family and she is identified by her relationships to men. A newspaper editorial states:

The domestic and social ideal is, practically speaking, the one generally recognized by Englishwomen as the highest to which they can aspire. To be a good wife, mother, daughter or sister, is, so to speak, the highest ambition of a woman.¹⁷

Women are still seen in the same old ways. Their dependence, weakness, and innocence were given special emphasis and used as rationale for confining women even more closely to the private sphere. A woman of that era writes: "There is something unfeminine in independence. It is contrary to Nature and therefore it offends. A really sensible woman feels her dependence; she does what she can . . . but she is conscious of

¹⁴ Charles J. Eliot quoted in Reed, 216.

¹⁵ Reed, 217, 225.

¹⁶ Reed, 200.

¹⁷ Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, quoted in Reed, 228.

inferiority, and therefore grateful for support.”¹⁸ Women are inferior and dependent by nature. They must exercise power indirectly by manipulation: “They should remember that by them influence is to be obtained, not by assumption, but by a delicate appeal to affection or principle. Women in this respect are something like children--the more they show their need of support the more engaging they are.”¹⁹

The continuation of the first-century Mediterranean role of women as imaging shame is clear in Sydney Smith’s 1809 sermon on adultery.

They [women] cannot bear shame, and . . . the consciousness of guilt: they are not fitted for it . . . they were never intended to endure it . . . the freshness and the fragrance are gone forever. . . . The business of the world devolves upon men: they are compelled to act, and they may forget the judgments of the world upon particular parts of their conduct; but women have no great and absorbing occupations to turn their minds from the contemplation of their own unhappiness . . . a man who does wrong may still (however unjustly) uphold himself by the splendour and importance of his talents and attainments . . . but women restrained to the narrow circle of domestic life, must be innocent, or they will be nothing. If they cannot offer to mankind the spectacle of purity and righteousness, they have nothing else to offer which is great and estimable. We expect to find all things according to the genius and purpose of their nature. . . . So, in a woman must there ever dwell the dignity and elevation of virtue . . . we turn to women for the best spectacle this world can afford of purity, innocence, and peace.²⁰

Women are defined by men and exist to meet their needs. Women’s identity and sense of self worth are found only in their sexual purity and their familial relationships.

Lilian Shiman describes this further:

Her position was defined according to her relationship to others: she was a wife or a mother and must act only according to this relationship. Well-bred ladies did not put themselves forward nor did they take any active role in public affairs. Their education was directed to minimal intellectual development and maximal domestic competence. The whole focus of female instruction was on achieving a “good” marriage with a rich or well connected male. Most men wanted a pliable, docile wife. . . . After marriage, a woman’s duty was to raise and care for her children and support her husband in all matters. . . . Home and children were the only approved object of woman’s attention.²¹

¹⁸ Elizabeth Sanford, *Woman in her Social and Domestic Character* (1831), quoted in Walther Besant, *Fifty Years Ago* (New York, 1888), 19 quoted in Lilian Lewis Shiman, “ ‘Changes are Dangerous’: Women and Temperance in Victorian England,” *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, ed. Gail Malmgren (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 193.

¹⁹ Sanford, quoted in Shiman, 193.

²⁰ Smith, 218-19.

²¹ Shiman, 193-94.

And women continue to be responsible for male behavior: "Working women were blamed for drinking husbands, among other things; husbands . . . went to the public houses because their homes were 'without comfort.'"²²

Although this ideology remained potent, as the century progressed changes in society began to affect women's role. Secularization and urbanization continued. Higher education became available to women. The large number of females in proportion to males created a large spinster class who were unable to marry and became dependent on the generosity of a father, brother, or other male relative, often resulting in social embarrassment and burden on the family. Philanthropic activities were already considered socially acceptable for upper and middle class women, who now had even more time and resources to devote to volunteer work.²³

As a result of these and other factors, women began to move out of the home, becoming active in philanthropy, volunteer service, religious orders, and secular professions. But the scope of their activities continued to be shaped by the old view of women as self-sacrificing servants and ancient concerns about their sexual purity. Not only were deaconesses and nuns celibate, but celibacy was the norm in the new secular professions, especially nursing and teaching.²⁴

Although women had little power in the Anglican church, religion did provide them with increased access to the public sphere in a way that was congruent with dominant social values. At the same time that women were becoming more active outside the home, religion, in both England and America, was being seen increasingly as a female sphere. "To be a good woman was to be a good Christian, but to be a good man was to be a good citizen, active, competitive, self-confident."²⁵ Work in the church came to be seen as an extension of woman's domestic activities.

²² Shiman, 194.

²³ See Reed, 211-13; and Susan P. Casteras, "Virgin Vows: The Early Victorian Artists' Portrayal of Nuns and Novices," *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, ed. Gail Malmgreen (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 130.

²⁴ Malmgreen, introduction, 8.

²⁵ Mary Maples Dunn, "Saints and Sisters," *Women in American Religion*, ed. Janet James (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), quoted in Malmgreen, introduction, 3.

Women became active in the church for a number of reasons including religious belief, boredom, escape for confinement in the home, and/or a chance to feel useful. For some women involvement in the church was an opportunity to assert their independence or a way of rebelling against the conventions of Victorian society.²⁶

As one of few socially approved outlets for women's creativity and enterprise, religion provided an opportunity for self-expression and achievement beyond the domestic sphere. Women's interest in decoration and skill in embroidery embellished Anglo-Catholic parishes. Other women found some financial independence in writing religious novels and hymns. Church women became active in temperance, anti-slavery and other social reform movements. The preaching and public speaking roles that were opening to Protestant women were not as available to Anglicans. But Anglican women served as Sunday school teachers and district visitors and were active in social service activities, mission societies, and study groups.²⁷ By mid-century the limitations of a volunteer status led to the establishment of two new professional roles for Anglican women: nuns and deaconesses.

The revival of Anglican sisterhoods by the Anglo-Catholics in the 1840s gave "unmarried women new and meaningful things to do . . . a 'privileged space' within which she could develop a 'career' of service."²⁸ Nuns became involved in nursing, education, social service, and mission and parochial work--nursing in a cholera epidemic and the Crimea and founding and operating schools for the poor, orphanages, soup kitchens, shelters for the homeless and old age homes. Some orders were administered by women, others by parish clergy.²⁹

From the beginning the sisterhoods were controversial. Some of the opposition was anti-Romanism, but much was based in the perceived threat to Victorian family values and accepted ideas about woman's nature. John Shelton Reed notes:

The rise of sisterhoods can be seen as a part of a larger "silent rebellion" against Victorian restrictions on women. Sisterhood life took women out of their homes.

²⁶ See Reed, 199-238.

²⁷ Brian Heeny, "The Beginning of Church Feminism: Women and the Councils of the Church of England, 1897-1919," *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, ed. Gail Malmgreen (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 261.

²⁸ Reed, 227.

²⁹ See Reed, 226-38; and Casteras, 134-35.

It gave them important work and sometimes great responsibility. It replaced their ties to fathers, husbands, and brothers by loyalties to church and sisterhood. It demonstrated that there were callings for women of the upper and middle classes other than those of wife, daughter and "charitable spinster." And it at least suggested that the religious life was the higher calling.³⁰

Supporters felt that sisterhoods could give women a position of respect in society and give them useful work to do. An Anglo-Catholic priest of the period noted:

Are the mothers of England quite sure that there is not in the hearts of their children a longing for something higher than the empty life which they are condemned to lead amid the shackles of fashionable society, and the world-vows under which many a soul is groaning for liberty?³¹

Opponents saw sisterhoods as a rejection of parental authority and the values of family and motherhood—thus posing a threat to the stability of patriarchal family and social structure. One indignant father wrote to the director of a convent:

I beg to ask by what light or authority—upon what principle of honour or religion—is my household broken into—my family peace invaded—my parental authority condemned. I shall be glad to have these touching questions replied to, and to be assured whether there is or is not any segment of the Church of England whose system is to slay the unity of families, to creep into houses by person or by letter, unknown to fathers.³²

They could not understand why women would want, or indeed have "any right to dedicate their bodies and souls to God instead of a husband."³³ Some argued that sisterhoods were against nature.

God having given her a nature that looks to the other sex for support, she is less self-sufficient; . . . with stronger sympathies and susceptibilities, and a warmer heart, to be severed without hope from the sphere of her natural influence does infinite violence to her and she soon becomes morbid, and deteriorates more rapidly though less grossly than man . . . protracted silence frets her.³⁴

Even where there was not overt hostility, popular views of nuns tended to be sexist,

³⁰ Reed, 229-30.

³¹ Cecil Wray of St. Martin's Church, Liverpool, in a sermon, "Sisterhoods on Their Trial," quoted in Catherine M. Prelinger, "The Female Diaconate in the Anglican Church: What Kind of Ministry for Women," *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, ed. Gail Malmgreen (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 165.

³² *Statement of the Rev. J. Scobell* (London, 1864) quoted in Prelinger, 164-65.

³³ Casteras, 136-37.

³⁴ From an anonymous chapter on "Sisterhood Life" (1867), quoted in Reed, 229.

combining male fantasies of repressed sexuality with stereotypes of nuns as the “perfect embodiment of the Victorian ideal of womanhood—virginity, docility, dedication, spirituality and modesty.”³⁵

There was some question, even among supporters, about the autonomy of the sisterhoods and their control by women. One leading Anglo-Catholic, Edward Pusey, related this to concern for clerical privilege, the clergy being “very much wedded to the modern idea of the Clergy, to have everything in their parishes under their own control . . . to interfere or check or wish to control any work, which religious women wish to set about in their parish (would) be most horrible tyranny.” He makes an unusual statement for his time, “I think that it is a wrong ambition of men, to wish to have the direction of the work of women. I should fear that it would be for the injury of both. Women ought to understand their own work, the education and care of young women (in this case); or they would not be fit for it at all.”³⁶

The deaconess movement in the Anglican church opened another avenue for women interested in professional service in the church. This was based on the German deaconess model and introduced into Britain by Florence Nightingale for many of the same reasons that sisterhoods had developed.

The want of necessary occupation among English girls must have struck everyone. . . . In the middle classes, how many there are who feel themselves burdensome to their fathers or brother but who, not finding husbands, and not having the education to be governesses, do not know what to do with themselves.³⁷

The first deaconess was episcopally set apart in 1862 and the movement spread to America and Scotland and to other denominations, focusing on pastoral ministry and service to the poor.

Deaconesses were supported by Evangelicals as a more acceptable alternative to sisterhoods. They presented less of a threat to patriarchal authority and Victorian family ideology. Deaconesses were celibate, but because no vows were taken they did not permanently renounce marriage. Family authority was not threatened by donations of

³⁵ Casteras, 130.

³⁶ Edward Pusey quoted in Reed, 236.

³⁷ Florence Nightengale quoted in Prelinger, 163.

property as in the sisterhoods. Deaconess training was based on the patriarchal model of the contemporary German family. They served in parochial and diocesan rather than communal settings, serving clergy in subordinate capacities.

The major controversy centered on their ecclesiastical status, and their role in relation to ordination was never clear. Although they were set apart by the laying on of hands by a bishop, they were never formally accepted in the clerical order of deacons and the most common model seemed to be the deaconesses of the early church. The deaconess movement was never as successful as the sisterhoods, perhaps because they offered less opportunity for independence. By the end of the century service oriented women were increasingly drawn to foreign missions and the growing female professions.³⁸

Despite their activity, women continued to have no power and little voice in church counsels. "Women occupied virtually no positions of leadership or responsibility in the official life of the Church at any level. . . . Women's sphere in the late Victorian Church was decidedly subordinate, limited and controlled everywhere by the authority of men."³⁹ Women at a Church of England meeting in Reading in 1883 could listen to, but not give, papers on "Women's Work." They were not even allowed to attend sessions on "Purity" and "The Prevention of the Degradation of Women and Children."⁴⁰

In England the church was run by clerics, who were of course male. In the United States the laity were more powerful, but, since only men could participate in vestries and church conventions, the effect on women was the same. Not surprisingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, a feminist movement began in the church as an extension of earlier secular feminism, and women began to demand a voice and vote in church affairs.

Summary

In the nineteenth century, the rising middle class in both England and America enshrine family and gender ideologies that encourage behavior now seen as dysfunctional and co-dependent. Traditional hierarchical social structures and patriarchal values continue to be defended as the necessary basis for social survival, and in an increasingly secular age

³⁸ The discussion of deaconesses is based on Prelinger, 161-86.

³⁹ Heeny, 260.

⁴⁰ Malmgreen, introduction, 7.

seem to take on even more dimensions of the sacred. The patriarchal family that provides the model for other social institutions is not only accepted as natural and God given, but is idealized to the point that, for many people, including good Anglicans, loyalty to the family comes before allegiance to God. And this is seen as only natural and right.

The ideal Victorian family is almost a caricature of traditional patriarchy, with the supremacy of husbands, fathers, and brothers and the helplessness and unworldliness of their female dependents exaggerated to the extreme. That the paternalism tended to be benign makes it no less controlling and deadly to the autonomy and self-worth of wives and children. These families revolve around the needs, desires, perceptions, and opinions of the dominant males. It is no wonder that male authors idealize their peace and happiness while females begin to raise questions about the satisfaction and fulfillment of other family members.

This ideology is especially problematic for females. A description of the ideal woman of the early Victorian period--a manipulative, self-sacrificing care giver, dependent on relationships for identity and self-worth--is almost synonymous with a co-dependent person.

Victorian women are encouraged to use manipulation as a method of control. In true co-dependent fashion they are taught that they are responsible for the conduct, and especially the addictive behavior, of others. Like their predecessors they are taught that they are inferior by nature and are socialized into a subordinate role. They are not encouraged to develop an independent sense of self, or clear boundaries of their own, but remain enmeshed in others. Their identity is found in familial relationships, primarily relationships to males, where they are defined by their roles as daughters, wives, and sisters. They are restricted to the domestic sphere where their self worth comes from relationships and service to others. Their limited social functions--reproducing and nurturing children and meeting the needs of their husbands and families--allow recognition only within intimate relationships and carry the expectation of self-giving service.

Certain traditional female role expectations are exaggerated in this period. A great emphasis is placed on woman's weakness and dependency. Her social role of imaging

shame is stressed and males become very concerned about controlling her sexual purity.

Much of this may be a reaction to social change. Traditional values are being challenged as the social system adapts to new realities--the scientific and industrial revolutions, secularization, the growth of empire in England and western expansion in the United States. As the century progresses women begin to move more rapidly into the public sphere and their roles expand to include new volunteer and professional activities. While these retain the old values--subservience, self-sacrificial service, and sexual purity--they do allow more room for independence and achievement. Women, and some men, begin to question the old values and distribution of power, and set the stage for further change in the next century.

As in the past, the church reflects social values and seems to react to, rather than lead, changes in society. Much of this is negative from the point of view of co-dependency as the Anglican church continues to legitimize class, sex, and racial hierarchies and embraces and institutionalizes Victorian family ideology. Classism remains a major problem. Much of the interest in social reform seems patronizing, and almost all writings reflect the concerns and viewpoints of women and men of the middle and upper classes. Positively, some, especially the Anglo-Catholics, openly challenge patriarchal values, seek to expand women's independence, and begin to question old assumptions about woman's nature. In reflecting on religion in this period, Gail Malmgreen notes the need, "to keep alive the central paradox, the complex tension between religion as 'opiate' and as an embodiment of ideological and institutional sexism, and religion as transcendent and liberating force."⁴¹

Twentieth Century

Introduction

These tensions continue to build throughout the twentieth century as church and society attempt to adjust to a rapidly changing world. By the end of the century both church and culture must deal the widening gap between the old, unquestioned allegiance to a patriarchal world-view and emerging visions of equality and justice. The resulting clash

⁴¹ Malmgreen, introduction, 6-7.

of beliefs and values raises many complex issues, many of which—equality vs. fixed hierarchical systems, distribution of power, the role and nature of women, changing family systems—are related to co-dependency.

This section explores the response of the American Episcopal church to these issues by examining two areas: prayer book revision and the ordination of women. Both have been controversial and both represent efforts by the church to respond to the changing nature of society. Liturgical and catechetical changes are useful indicators of evolving beliefs and assumptions, and the arguments for and against women's ordination provide a clear view of positions that support or challenge patriarchal tradition and ideology.

Prayer Book Revision

1928. Like the 1892 version, The American Book of Common Prayer (1928) represents a further revision of the basic post-Reformation Book of Common Prayer.⁴² Several changes are significant from the point of view of co-dependence.

The rite for Visitation of the Sick moves away from the sixteenth-century view of sickness as punishment for sin and the resulting focus on penitence and preparation for death.⁴³ In the prayers for the sick such petitions as, "Sanctify, we beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to *him*; that the sense of *his* weakness may add strength to *his* faith, and seriousness to *his* repentance,"⁴⁴ are replaced with prayer for healing, "Visit *him*, O Lord, with thy loving mercy, and so restore *him* to *his* former health, that *he* may give thank unto thee in thy holy Church."⁴⁵ The old exhortations affirming that sickness is "God's visitation" and encouraging patience and thankfulness for suffering are eliminated and God's comfort and healing are emphasized in prayer and scripture readings. Psalm 130, with its emphasis on redemption from sin, is replaced with Psalms 3, 43, 138, and 103 which accentuate divine assistance and respond to God's care with praise and thanksgiving.

⁴² Episcopal Church, Book of Common Prayer (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1943), hereafter cited as BCP (1928).

⁴³ See Hatchett, Commentary, 462; and Stuhlman, 132.

⁴⁴ Episcopal Church, Book of Common Prayer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1898), 306, hereafter cited as BCP (1898).

⁴⁵ BCP (1928), 309.

The tendency to view marriage as a more equal partnership is reflected in the Service for Holy Matrimony where bride and groom now make the same vows. The man no longer promises “With all my worldly good I thee endow,”⁴⁶ and the woman no longer promises to obey and serve her husband.

The language continues to be exclusive with male nouns and pronouns used for both God and generic human references. For example, the communion service contains such phrases as, “to give thanks for all men,” and “Judge of all men.”⁴⁷

1979. In many ways the American Book of Common Prayer of 1979 is a break with tradition.⁴⁸ All previous prayer books had been based on the Reformation prayer books of England and Scotland. The Book of Common Prayer (1979), while retaining the traditional language in alternative rites for the Eucharist, Morning and Evening Prayer and the Burial Office, is basically a new approach based on ecumenical scholarship. Written in contemporary language, it incorporates new cultural presuppositions.⁴⁹ Approved by the General Convention in 1979, it has become normative for much of the American church. Opposition to its adoption has focused on questions of language and underlying theology that are seen as threats to traditional values, including patriarchy.

The Book of Common Prayer (1979) continues to move away from the old emphasis on penitence with its focus on human guilt, shame, and unworthiness. Standing is preferred to kneeling.⁵⁰ The traditional Rite I general confession in Morning Prayer omits the phrases, “there is no health in us” and “miserable offenders.”⁵¹ The general confession in contemporary Rite II focuses sin as the lack of love--of God and neighbor. The Prayer of Humble Access (“We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table . . .”) becomes optional in the traditional Rite I Eucharist liturgy and is omitted from contemporary Rite II. The Penitential Order is separated from the Eucharistic liturgy in both

⁴⁶ BCP (1898), 302-03.

⁴⁷ BCP (1928), 74-75.

⁴⁸ Episcopal Church, Book of Common Prayer (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1977), hereafter cited as BCP (1979).

⁴⁹ Stuhlman, 125-26, 134-35.

⁵⁰ Stuhlman, 155.

⁵¹ BCP (1928), 6.

rites and made optional for use at the beginning of the liturgy or as a special service on penitential occasions.⁵²

For the first time since the Reformation private confession is officially sanctioned, again providing a mechanism for resolving guilt and mitigating the sense of isolation inherent in the modern focus on individual sin and responsibility. The new Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, as the name implies, emphasizes forgiveness and reintegration into the community. The old rite of Visitation of the Sick becomes Ministration to the Sick and continues the shift begun in 1928 away from a focus on penitence and preparation for death toward prayer for healing and restoration.⁵³

The Marriage rite continues the trend toward equality begun in 1928. All vows are identical for bride and groom. The giving away of the bride is no longer required. This may be omitted entirely or, as an alternative, both bride and groom can be presented. Provision is made for both the woman and man to give and receive rings.⁵⁴ Marriage continues to signify “the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church.” A statement of the purpose of marriage is restored to the rite, but with different emphases than the traditional 1662 statement.

1979: The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.⁵⁵

1662: First, It [marriage] was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord. . . . Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication. . . . Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.⁵⁶

Unity and joy are now primary and avoidance of sin is eliminated.

The 1979 prayer book delineates clear roles for the three clerical orders and for the laity in the Ordination rites and rubrics. Increased participation by the laity as a group and

⁵² Hatchett, *Commentary*, 101, 311, 345.

⁵³ Hatchett, *Commentary*, 462.

⁵⁴ Hatchett, *Commentary*, 430, 436.

⁵⁵ *BCP* (1979), 423.

⁵⁶ Blunt, 450.

as individuals is encouraged. Provision is made for lay persons to act as oblationers, lectors, and intercessors, and appropriately licensed lay persons may assist in passing the chalice, carry communion to the sick, and lead morning and evening prayer.⁵⁷ Because baptism is now the only requirement for admission to communion, children become a more central part of the parish Eucharist.⁵⁸ Public worship is no longer the sole province of adults and the clergy.

The old Catechism was largely a repetition of the Apostles creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. It included the statement on duty to neighbor from 1559, "To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters," that encouraged subservient behavior.⁵⁹

The completely revised 1979 Catechism is a series of theological statements, including teaching about the nature of God, sin, and human nature. God is a loving creator, the universe is good, humans "are a part of God's creation, made in the image of God . . . free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God."⁶⁰ Sin is the misuse of freedom, making wrong choices, rebelling against God, putting ourselves in God's place, "seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation."⁶¹ The church explicitly teaches that, "All people are worthy of respect and honor, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God."⁶²

Although an attempt was made to use inclusive language when referring to both men and women, exceptions remain in the creed, quotations from scripture, the Burial rite, and the psalms. Whenever alternatives are given for references to specific persons, the pronouns appearing in italics are always masculine--*he, him, his, brother (sister)* --

⁵⁷ Stuhlman, 151.

⁵⁸ Stuhlman, 151-52.

⁵⁹ BCP (1928), 580.

⁶⁰ BCP (1979), 845; see also 846, 849.

⁶¹ BCP (1979), 848; see also 845.

⁶² BCP (1979), 846.

implying once again that male is normative. All gender specific references to God--pronouns, images, and metaphors--are masculine.⁶³

1989. Concerns about this exclusive language led to a resolution by the General Convention of 1985 requiring the preparation of "inclusive language liturgies for the regular services of the church."⁶⁴ As a result Supplemental Liturgical Texts, providing alternative services for Morning and Evening Prayer and the Eucharist, were authorized for trial use in 1989. These texts use a variety of strategies in an attempt to achieve greater breadth and inclusivity.

A major effort is made to expand traditional male images of God through the use of neglected metaphors, as in the second Eucharistic prayer.

Your wisdom, your spirit moved over the deep and brought to birth the heavens . . . and finally humankind. You made us in your image, male and female, to love and care for the earth and its creatures as you love and care for us, your children You took us by the hand and taught us to walk in your ways. And though you led us with cords of compassion and bands of love, we wandered far away. Yet as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. . . .

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He yearned to draw all the world to himself, as a hen gathers her young under her wings. . . .

Let your Spirit who broods over the whole creation dwell within us. . . . Draw us, O God, to your heart at the heart of the world.⁶⁵

The goal is not to replace the old, but to give "a fuller and more comprehensive picture" of God.⁶⁶

Attempts have been made to make biblical texts more inclusive. New texts with a broader range of metaphors are added, for example new canticles that refer to Wisdom as "she" and "her."⁶⁷ Corrections are made in cases where errors in biblical translation had used male-oriented language for God even though this did not appear in the original texts.

⁶³ Stuhlman, 130.

⁶⁴ Episcopal Church, Commentary on Prayer Book Studies 30 Containing Supplemental Liturgical Texts (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1989), C-15, hereafter cited as Commentary. The following discussion is based on the commentary and liturgies in this document.

⁶⁵ Commentary, 70-73.

⁶⁶ Commentary, C-10.

⁶⁷ Commentary, 27-28.

Some terms are changed to include both males and females, such as the substitution of "forebears" for "fathers." In other cases texts are amended to "provide a more inclusive liturgical wording while remaining faithful to the content of the passage. . . .Some . . . masculine terms and pronouns referring to God have been changed," others have been retained.⁶⁸

Some prayers are rewritten to address God directly, using second rather than third person pronouns. Others substitute nouns for pronouns or change pronouns: "God's" instead of "his," "It is right to give our thanks and praise" for "It is right to give him thanks and praise," "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God" for "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."⁶⁹ All general human references are inclusive of both females and males.⁷⁰

The two new Eucharistic rites focus on the themes of "the creation of all people in the image of God as the source of Christian inclusiveness" and "the central metaphor of God bringing to birth and nourishing the whole creation."⁷¹ Inclusivity and intimacy are stressed. Prayers use such phrases as "Be near to us and embrace us," "Born into the human family . . . walking among us, he touched us with healing and transforming power," "welcome us into the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters," and "all the holy men and women loved by you."⁷²

The newest services for study and trial use, Supplemental Liturgical Materials, continue the search for "balanced language" and balanced imagery."⁷³ These additional worship materials have been selected with the goal of "challenging the church to hear and use familiar and new passages and prayers in a different way," opening the language "to new interpretation and the hearer to deeper meaning."⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Commentary, C-18.

⁶⁹ Commentary, 66.

⁷⁰ Commentary, C-18-19.

⁷¹ Commentary, 58.

⁷² Commentary, 61, 67, 69-70.

⁷³ Episcopal Church, Supplemental Liturgical Materials (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1991), 6, hereafter cited as Supplemental.

⁷⁴ Supplemental, 6.

All of this has not only linguistic, but theological implications because it represents a conscious attempt to change, albeit through broadening and enrichment, the concept of God. As the Commentary on Prayer Book Studies 30 clearly states, "The way we pray really does shape the way we think. The images and metaphors and just plain words we use in our prayer . . . tend to shape our faith and our thought."⁷⁵ And this has been the source of much of the opposition to both the 1979 re-vision and the 1989 and 1991 alternative services. The changes, especially those of 1989 and 1991, represent a clear challenge to the patriarchal world view with its gender based hierarchy and male referenced reality based in the equation of male with God.

Summary. The American prayer book revisions of the twentieth century have reflected changes in social values as well as contemporary theological insights and biblical scholarship. In the major revision of 1979 the temptation to resist change was overcome, and the church as a whole accepted a major break with the past. The suggested changes in the 1989 and 1991 supplements, especially inclusive language and the use of new images and metaphors for God, represent a direct challenge to patriarchal tradition. This willingness to begin to acknowledge and value women's experience and the new emphasis on inclusivity is a step toward correcting the invisibility and inferiority that can lead to low self-esteem and co-dependence for women and other marginalized groups. How these additional services will be received by the church as a whole remains to be seen.

The movement in society and the church toward equal rights for women is also reflected in changes in the marriage service. The old symbols of patriarchal authority are gone. Vows are identical. Women need no longer be passed from father to husband. The exchange of rings can now symbolize mutual commitment rather than female submission. Obedience and service is no longer an overt expectation of wives. However this works out in individual marriages, the ideal of the church, at least, is now one of equal partnership. The change in emphasis from procreation and avoidance of sin to mutual joy gives a very different message about human sexuality. All this begins to shift the ideal for women away

⁷⁶ Commentary, C-11.

from the inferior, submissive, dependent servant that was synonymous with co-dependency.

A similar shift away from the reinforcement of co-dependent behavior is seen in the deemphasis on penitence and the related emotions of shame, guilt, and unworthiness. The new liturgical and catechetical emphasis on the goodness of creation and respect and valuing of all persons as created in the image of God builds trust and self-esteem. The portrayal of God less as a wrathful, demanding father and more as a just and loving creator provides a different model for parenting and gives no encouragement to domestic violence.

The reintroduction of the rite of Reconciliation provides the opportunity for honest self examination and resolution of guilt. A shift in emphasis from the virtue of obedience to that of love, new teaching about goodness of creation and honor and respect for all humans created in the image of God, and the inclusion and affirmation of children in the parish Eucharist--all are potentially positive steps away from co-dependent behavior.

The attitude toward hierarchy is less clear and the new liturgies reflect some ambiguity--participation by laity is encouraged and opportunities are expanded, yet the distinction between the four orders--three clerical orders and one lay--is retained and clarified. On one hand there is talk of equality of ministry, on the other hierarchical distinctions are emphasized.

The liturgical life of the church in the twentieth century has taken positive steps in a direction away from teaching and reinforcing co-dependency producing attitudes, values, and emotions. But much more remains to be done before old, dysfunctional patterns are replaced with truly life-giving worship for all participants.

Ordination of Women

Introduction. The second major threat to patriarchy in the twentieth century has been the ordination of women. The arguments in this dispute provide insight into contemporary beliefs about authority, family, and the nature and role of women.

At the beginning of the twentieth-century women were still excluded from the ordained ministry and decision making bodies of the church. But as the century progressed the impact of changing roles and perceptions of women in American society forced the

church to reconsider its traditional position. Progress was slow by secular standards and there was resistance in some parts of the church, but by the 1970s women in American Anglicanism were able to participate fully in all lay functions, serving in church government as officers and delegates at parish, diocesan, and national levels and assisting in worship services as acolytes, lay readers, and chalice bearers.⁷⁶

More controversy surrounded the ordination of women. This was due in part to Anglican beliefs about the nature of holy orders, especially the priesthood and episcopacy. Many subscribed to the old belief that ordination conferred a change in class and nature—an obstacle to the initial approval of ordination for women, but a source of acceptance and status once ordination was conferred. The common Anglican view of the priest as a representative of Christ has had significant implications, as has belief in the hierarchical authority of priests and bishops. The Anglican emphasis on apostolic succession has been a key factor in discussions of the episcopacy. Other factors, including a tendency to accept cultural norms, a fondness for history and tradition, and a desire to avoid unpleasantness are a part of the general Anglican ethos.⁷⁷

Despite a desire to avoid the issue, internal and external pressures began to force the church to take a stand. The diaconate, perhaps because of its service orientation, subordinate status, and lack of clear definition, seemed less controversial, and the first women's ordination issue to be resolved was the clarification of the old ambiguity about the clerical status of deaconesses. In 1968 the Lambeth Conference approved their ordination as deacons, and the 1970 General Convention of the American church passed canons

⁷⁶ See Emily C. Hewitt and Suzanne R. Hiatt, Women Priests: Yes or No? (New York: Seabury, 1973), 14-15.

⁷⁷ For example, even supporters of women's ordination such as Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple could write, "Personally I want (as at present advised) to see women ordained to the priesthood, but still more do I want to see both real advance toward the reunion of Christendom, and the general emancipation of women. To win admission to the priesthood now would put back the former and to moot it would put back the latter." Quoted in Owen C. Thomas, "William Temple," The Spirit of Anglicanism, ed. William J. Wolf (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), 105.

As one Roman Catholic observer of the Anglican debate comments: "In the tradition of the church, involvement in cultural prejudice has far too often led to a desire not to rock the boat till the water is calm. This is reflected in the rejection, to date, of women's orders in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, in the procrastination of the decision on them in the Anglican Communion. . . . There is no doubt that there is prudence involved, too, but lots of prejudices look like prudence." Frans Jozef van Beek, "Invalid or Merely Irregular—Comments by a Reluctant Witness," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 11 (1974): 398.

permitting women to be ordained deacons under the same regulations as men.⁷⁸

The ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy was more controversial and the complex and interconnected theological, political, and cultural issues it raises have been the focus of continuing debate. This dispute has not taken place along familiar party lines, but new alignments have formed, often with extreme Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics joining to support a traditionalist position opposed to the ordination of women. Both argue from tradition with Evangelicals citing scripture and Catholics emphasizing precedent, the nature of the priesthood, and the historic apostolic faith. Both cite familiar arguments from the patriarchal tradition of Western Christianity, while supporters of women's ordination tend to rely on concepts based in modern theological, biblical, and secular scholarship.

Arguments against the ordination of women. Some reasons for opposition are political. There is concern that the ordination of women will impair the unity of the Anglican communion or adversely affect relationships with the Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, and Orthodox churches.⁷⁹ Others seem to be related to a generic male ambivalence about women, rooted perhaps in mother-child relationships or sexual insecurity, and expressed as a kind of generalized misogyny and hostility toward females.⁸⁰

Other arguments are based more directly on traditional patriarchal positions. Some opponents argue that the ordination of women is incompatible with the divinely ordained pattern of Christian organization as modeled in the patriarchal family. This familiar family, led by "a strong, firm father whose authority is unquestioned by the rest of the family" has become "a basic tenet of the Christian faith" and provides the model for church organization and parish life.⁸¹ What husband is to wife, Christ is to the church and the priest is to the congregation. "Christ is the head of the church as the father is the head of the family. Therefore . . . since priests represent Christ in the church and on earth are the heads of their congregations, a woman can no more be a priest than a woman can head a Christian

⁷⁸ Hewitt and Hiatt, 103-04.

⁷⁹ Christian Howard, "Ordination of Women in the Anglican Communion and the Ecumenical Debate," Ecumenical Review, 29 (1977): 246, 250-51.

⁸⁰ Hewitt and Hiatt, 35-44.

⁸¹ Hewitt and Hiatt, 30-31.

household.”⁸²

The example of a woman priest is a serious threat to this divinely ordained order of male dominance and female submission. An Anglican theologian writes:

Wives and mothers are to be lovingly submissive to their husbands. . . . The sex-relation once set up must have priority over all other natural relations. . . . Even if ordination and matrimony were canonically declared to be mutually incompatible, so that no ordained women were allowed to marry, and no married women to be ordained, the wife and mother would be severely tempted to arrogate to herself a sexual equality with, if not superiority to, her husband analogous to the position of her ordained unmarried sister; dangerous strains would be introduced into domestic life; and the integrity of the Christian doctrine of the married relationship would be gravely challenged.”⁸³

Another area of objection to the ordination of women involves beliefs about the nature of women, the nature of priesthood, and the significance of the maleness of Jesus. Some arguments repeat the opinions of Aquinas that women are deficient in spiritual receptivity and power and thus cannot receive the indelible character of the priesthood, the divinely given “power or strength to perform the task of ministry.”⁸⁴

Others believe that because the priest represents Christ only men ought to be ordained. This argument echoes Augustine and Aquinas.

Because the pre-existent Word became human in the form of a Jewish male there was a significance in the particularity of maleness; a significance which militates against the ordination of women to the priesthood. Sexual differentiation, unlike Jewishness, belongs to a fundamental differentiation in the created order and has necessarily a significance over and above any significance that can be claimed for any other particularity. . . . The incarnation of the Son of God as a male is consonant with the character of God as known through creation and revelation. The correspondence between the character of God perceived in God’s self-revelation, and what is understood about the character of male humanity, is consonant with the incarnation of the Son of God as male. . . . It is congruous with the nature of God as he relates to humanity that the Word should have become a man. Male humanity reflects God known through creation and revelation in a way that female humanity does not. . . . Maleness reflects the fact that the initiative is always with God in a way that femaleness does not.”⁸⁵

⁸² Hewitt and Hiatt, 30-31.

⁸³ Kenneth E. Kirk quoted in Hewitt and Hiatt, 66.

⁸⁴ Paul K. Jewett, The Ordination of Women (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 16. The article discusses this in detail in pages 13-25.

⁸⁵ Church of England, General Synod, The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Second Report by the House of Bishops (London: General Synod, Church of England, 1988), 26-27, 35.

In this patriarchal view sex-role differentiation is all important, only males fully image a male-like God, and females are passive, incomplete and inferior.

Some argue that, while women may be ordained as deacons, they cannot be priests or bishops because these orders “exercise authority and leadership over the community . . . [and] . . . represent the ministry of Christ, the Head of the Church.”⁸⁶ This position that women ought not to be in leadership positions in the church is based on traditional arguments from scripture: Eve’s secondary creation from Adam, Eve’s subordinate role as helper, and Pauline and deutero-Pauline texts about the role of women in the church.

Those of us who hold this view of headship, subordination and complementarity hold that women ought not to be ordained to a priesthood which entails leadership, oversight, headship and the exercise of authority. To so ordain women would be to contradict a fundamental creation ordinance.⁸⁷

Some opponents of women’s ordination also argue that women’s nature is different from that of men but emphasize difference rather than inferiority (even though inferiority is often implied in their arguments). This position contends that God intends women and men to fill separate roles in the life of the church. Jesus and the apostles are the models for the ministry of men in public and leadership roles. Mary is the model for the ministry of women as mothers and homemakers. Biology is destiny. “The femininity of woman is clearly marked out by her bodily function. By nature she is destined for a different life from the man’s . . . for every normal woman is a potential mother . . . every man . . . is a potential priest.”⁸⁸

Some argue that subordination, while a part of the order of creation, does not mean inferiority.

The biblical view of women’s subordination is not . . . because the weaker members must be governed by the wiser; nor is it because man is more rational than woman; nor because women are inferior. It is rather that for harmony and stability in life one person must depend on another for direction. In exercising authority men are characteristically men and in being subject to authority women are characteristically women. This difference in function is built into the order of creation. Subordination is a positive gift in creation: exercised with the mutuality of love it reflects order within the Godhead. The principle is to be lived out most

⁸⁶ Church of England General Synod, 42.

⁸⁷ Church of England General Synod, 71, 42-72.

⁸⁸ F. C. Blomfield, quoted in Hewitt and Hiatt, 65-66.

clearly within the marriage bond: A man is to be head over his wife and head over the family, but “the husband must give his wife what is due to her and the wife equally must give the husband his due” (1 Cor. 7.3). This proper combination of subordination and mutuality is to be reflected also in the community.⁸⁹

Again, the argument is familiar. Men are naturally dominant, women naturally subordinate. Hierarchy is the only conceivable form of social organization, and the patriarchal family is the model for church and society. It is interesting to note that those who see subordination as a gift--white, Anglo-Saxon males, Bishops of the Church of England--are not in a position to receive it.

Other arguments hearken back to ancient associations of women with evil and sexual temptation. One writer notes that because of the “well known, though mysterious, affinity between religious emotion and sex-emotion” the priest must not convey any suggestion to arouse the imagination of the worshipers. He suggests that this is a reason not to ordain women because men, but not women, may become sexually aroused in church.

Men as such are very less likely to be an involuntary cause of distraction to women, under the circumstance of public worship, than women are to men; and that this a permanent fact of human nature, which can no more be abolished by modern progress than the law of gravitation can be abolished by modern progress.⁹⁰

In the immutable nature of things women are not persons but sex objects and seem to relate to men only through erotic love.⁹¹ And, as always, women are responsible for male sexual response.

Arguments for the ordination of women. Some arguments for women’s ordination are based on twentieth century cultural values of equality and autonomy. Others are practical and pastoral: the church needs the resources of women, women are being alienated by patriarchal attitudes and wounded by exclusion, invisibility, and reminders of their inferior status. Some reason that the activity of the Holy Spirit is thwarted if women, as well as men, do not have the opportunity to test their vocations.⁹²

⁸⁹ Church of England General Synod, 70.

⁹⁰ N. P. Williams, quoted in Jewett, 7-8.

⁹¹ Jewett, 10-11.

⁹² Hewit and Hiatt, 101.

The basic theological argument for the ordination of women is the claim that women have been created as full and complete human beings and therefore are to be treated as the equals of men in the church. Proponents of women's ordination do not see eternal significance in the specific maleness of Christ. They believe that the fact that God became human is the essential message of the incarnation and that women are an important part of this humanity. Therefore, an all male priesthood presents an incomplete representation of both God and humanity. They assert that the ordination of women "would make clear the inclusive quality of the risen and glorified humanity that is eternally a part of the Godhead and witness to a belief that God embraces and transcends male and female, masculine and feminine," and argue that because both men and women are redeemed by Christ the ordination of both to the priesthood witnesses to the inclusiveness of that redemption.⁹³

Supporters of the ordination of women argue that the scriptural texts cited by opponents reflect cultural attitudes rather than the order of creation, apply only to specific situations, and/or are open to various interpretations. Some believe that the traditional texts, rather than supporting the view that subordination of women to men is part of the created order, actually assert the "equal status and dignity of women and men." Some emphasize other passages, especially examples of women as prophets and witnesses of the resurrection, the affirmation of women by Jesus, and Pauline texts supporting equality and reporting on the activity of women in the early church. Others simply feel that the evidence of scripture is inconclusive about the ordination of women.⁹⁴

Proponents deny the patriarchal assumption that the rule of men over women is part of the divine order of creation. Some attribute this viewpoint to the cultural influences. Others suggest that hierarchical relationships of dominance and submission and the rule of husbands over wives are a result of the fall, from which all humanity has been redeemed by Christ.⁹⁵ They cite the example of Jesus who seems to offer a challenge to traditional patriarchal family ideology in his redefinition of family, warnings against the primacy of

⁹³ Church of England General Synod, 35.

⁹⁴ Church of England General Synod, 71-72.

⁹⁵ See Hewitt and Hiatt, 66-70; and Peter Clark, "Snakes and Ladders: Reflection on Hierarchy and the Fall," *Feminine in the Church*, ed. Monica Furlong (London: SPCK, 1984) 185-89.

family relationships, and expansion of traditional roles for women.⁹⁶

The appeals of opponents to tradition are countered with the reminder that in Anglican thought tradition is always subject to reason. As a 1968 Lambeth report on women in the priesthood notes:

If the ancient and medieval assumptions about the social role and inferior status of women are no longer accepted, the appeal to tradition is virtually reduced to the observation that there happens to be no precedent for ordaining women to be priests. The New Testament does not encourage Christians to think that nothing should be done for the first time.⁹⁷

Results. Despite continuing dissension and controversy, by the late twentieth century the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy in the Anglican communion has become a reality. Movement in this direction has been slow, but acceptance is growing.

The first Anglican ordination of a woman as priest, the wartime emergency ordination of Li Tim Oi in Hong Kong in 1944, was later rescinded. The first accepted ordinations of women to the priesthood also took place in the Diocese of Hong Kong in 1971. In 1974 twelve American women were ordained in an irregular service in Philadelphia. Either because of or in spite of the resultant uproar, the ordination of women as priests and bishops was approved by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1976. The first regular ordinations of women to the priesthood in America were held in 1977.

In 1978 the Lambeth Conference recognized the rights of autonomous churches to ordain women if they so chose, and in 1988 the conference resolved that each province should respect the decision of other provinces to ordain women to the episcopacy.⁹⁸ In 1989 an American, Barbara Harris of Massachusetts, was the first Anglican woman to be ordained to the episcopacy. She was followed by the ordination of the first woman to head a diocese, Penelope Jamieson of New Zealand, in 1990. A second American woman,

⁹⁶ See Mark 3:33-35; Matt. 10:34-39; Luke 10:38-42; and Luke 8:1-3.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Hewitt and Hiatt, 77.

⁹⁸ Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Women in the Episcopacy: The Process of Reception," *Saint Luke's Journal of Theology* 32, no. 4, (September 1989): 269-70.

Jean Holmes Dixon, was ordained as suffragan bishop of Washington, D. C. in 1992.

When the Church of England voted to ordain women in November 1992 it joined "12 of the 28 self-governing provinces in the Anglican Communion that already ordain women priests."⁹⁹ At the present time approximately 1500 women have been ordained as priests, with 80 per cent of these in the United States. The approval process is under way in other provinces, some of which now license women who have been ordained in other countries.¹⁰⁰ Some provinces are opposed to the ordination of women, or do not see it as an important issue at this time. The present consensus is to allow each province to make its own decision, while waiting to see how the issue works itself out in the ongoing life of the church.

Summary. The arguments for and against the ordination of women bring the issue of patriarchy into clear focus. Opponents explicitly state the traditional patriarchal view of Western Christianity that sees sex role hierarchy as the divinely ordained pattern for family and church organization, while proponents focus on emerging ideals of equality, justice, and inclusivity. Traditionalists oppose change and say women cannot be priests, citing the traditional reasons: women do not fully image God who exhibits male attributes, women are subordinate by nature and thus should not exercise authority but rather be obedient and passive recipients of male leadership, women ought to be satisfied with their God given role of wife and mother. Supporters of ordination reject sex role stereotyping and argue that God is not defined by gender and redeemed humanity includes both women and men who ought to relate to each other as equals. Each sees the importance of priests and bishops as mirrors of their view of reality and the Gospel.

The view of the proponents of ordination seems less prone to encourage co-dependency than does the patriarchal position of their opponents. Ideals of equality and inclusivity can enhance a sense of identity and self-worth, and encourage more responsible and less competitive and controlling ways of relating for both women and men.

⁹⁹ William Tuohy, "Women May be Priests, Church of England Says," Los Angeles Times, 12 November 1992: A12.

¹⁰⁰ See Jordan Bonfante, Helen Gibson, and Ratu Kamlani, "The Second Reformation," Time, 23 November 1992: 57; and Episcopal News Service, "ACC Releases Statistics on the Ordination of Women," 10 April 1992.

In addition, seeing women in leadership positions in liturgy and church government sends important messages to women about God and about themselves: they are not inherently inferior, their reality and experience is no longer ignored, it is possible for them to relate as equals and exercise power in direct ways. The impact of these messages will be enhanced if women clerics become fully integrated into the life of the church and move into positions of importance and power. There is always the danger that women will become tokens, be relegated to a second-class position, or simply be co-opted into an unchanged hierarchical organization, becoming part of the old clerical class structure, continuing the dominant/submissive relationships, power and control issues, and relationship problems that are so much a part of co-dependency. If this is to be avoided, it is essential that women's experience be named and claimed, and that emerging theological insights be explored, articulated clearly, and applied in the life of the church.

Summary

In America, despite continuing dissension, the mainstream of the church seems committed to liturgical renewal and the ordination of women. It is not clear if the church as a whole understands the implications of these changes. Traditionalist opponents to liturgical reform and ordination of women have been correct in insisting that important theological issues are at stake.

Most basic is the understanding of the nature of God. Although theoretically accepting the orthodox Christian position that God is genderless, traditional Anglicanism reflects the patriarchal view that God is male, with its corollary implications that the human male images God most completely and the human female is inferior to the human male. This, coupled with the belief that a fixed hierarchy is the only possible model for relationships, leads to a belief in a divine order characterized by the familiar series of dominance/submission dichotomies: God/human, human/nature, soul/body, male/female, husband/wife, Christ/church, priest/congregation. Males are superior to females, and females are to be submissive and obedient. The same pattern of dominance and submission applies to age, class, racial, and clerical hierarchies.

Despite what formal theology may say, traditionally these beliefs, stemming from

the unorthodox premise that God has a sexual identity, support and have been supported by those institutions that best express the Anglican ethos--liturgy and church organization. These are the very areas attacked by twentieth century reforms. Changes in the liturgy begin to suggest that God is more than male and may be more interested in a relationship of love than obedience and submission. The ordination of women supports this, suggesting that males are not the only image of God, as well as implying that exercise of ecclesiastical power need not be gender related. If this is true of the church, it may well be true of the family and other social organizations as well. The very roots of patriarchy are threatened. No wonder opposition has been so deep seated and emotional.

The arguments of the traditionalists echo the ancient beliefs of patriarchal Christianity: the divinely ordained nature of gender (and other) hierarchies, the incomplete and inferior nature of women, the inappropriateness of women in leadership and authoritative roles, the fear that any change in the existing order will result in social chaos. The major themes of co-dependency--struggle for control and power, dysfunctional relationships, and problems with self-worth and identity--run throughout their discussion along with the old patriarchal reinforcers of co-dependency: denigration of the experience of women and children and other inferior groups; shifting of blame and responsibility; emphasis on the desirability of obedience and submission; views of women as inferior, submissive, passive partial humans who are responsible for the behavior of others and gain identity and self-worth through relationships and self-sacrificing service.

Thus, from the point of view of co-dependency this beginning movement away from patriarchy is positive, as are the new ideas that are emerging to replace it. The new metaphors and images (including women in the roles of priest and bishop) that enlarge the vision of God, creation, and humanity; the emphasis on relationships based on inclusivity, equality, and respect, the replacement of an emphasis on guilt and shame with love and affirmation of self-worth--all are potentially useful antidotes to co-dependency.

This is only a beginning, and much more needs to be done in these areas if the church is to correct its overt and covert encouragement of co-dependence and move to a more positive affirmation of all human persons. As in preceding centuries almost all

discussion has focused on the issues and positions of mainstream white, middle and upper class men and women while classism and racism, which also contribute to co-dependency, are ignored.

Other problems related to co-dependency can be identified. The continuing tendency to idealize the patriarchal nuclear family leads to both pastoral and organizational difficulties. This model tends to exclude the great majority of people, in and out of the church, who no longer live in this kind of family and limits the church's ability to support and guide non-traditional families.

In addition, consciously and unconsciously, the church continues to model itself on the nuclear family, making the organization and its members especially vulnerable to duplication of all the co-dependency producing behavior of the dysfunctional family. If anything, the ordination of women may have made this problem worse--with both men and women in visible, leadership positions the temptation to equate the church community with the nuclear family is even stronger. Suggestions that women priests be called "mother" to go with the male priest's "father" would seem to compound the problem and increase the potential for disruptive transference and dysfunction.¹⁰¹

The Episcopal church's historical identification with a hierarchical organizational structure creates other problems. Although it is in the process of modifying its fixed gender hierarchy, the church continues to be a clerical hierarchy. This continuing affirmation of a four order structure, with all its implications of class distinction and clerical privilege, conflicts with the church's efforts to promote lay leadership and participation.

However benign, the very existence of fixed hierarchies gives troubling messages: some are inferior to others; inferiors exist to serve the needs of superiors; the dominant group is normative, makes the rules, sets the agenda, and interprets reality including the reality of the subordinate group; subordinate groups must be controlled through physical, psychological, or economic violence as necessary and socialized into appropriate role behavior--obedience, submissiveness, control of feelings, silence, self-sacrificial service. This is just as true of clerical hierarchies as it is of those based on sex, race, class, or age.

¹⁰¹ See Donald D. Hook, " 'Mother' as Title for Women Priests: A Prescriptive Paradigm," *Anglican Theological Review* 65 (October 1983): 419-23.

In this concluding decade of the twentieth-century American Anglicanism has only just begun to face issues of inequality and exclusion within its own organizational structure. It has yet to recognize the extent to which this injustice is perpetuated by the patriarchal attitudes and practices that continue to permeate the life of the church and contribute to the pain and dysfunction of individuals, families, and society itself.

CHAPTER 5

Co-dependency and Patriarchy in Contemporary American Society: Implications for the Church

Introduction

Through all the intellectual, political, scientific, and religious changes of the last two millennia the patriarchal world-view of the ancient Mediterranean culture has continued to shape the way Western women and men understand themselves, their society, and the world. The patriarchal system has been so dominant that alternative viewpoints have either been co-opted, as happened in the early Christian church; silenced, as women's voices have been through the centuries; or destroyed, as has been the experience of indigenous religious and social systems. In all areas of life the beliefs and practices of patriarchy have been accepted without question as reality, orthodoxy, the way things are and indeed should be. Now in late twentieth-century America traditional patriarchal assumptions and values are being challenged by powerful social forces. This chapter summarizes the relationship between co-dependency theory and patriarchal culture and religion, discusses the contemporary situation, and suggests implications for the church with the focus on American Anglicanism.

Co-dependency and Patriarchal Tradition

The patriarchal beliefs and values of first century Mediterranean culture, as modified and transmitted by the Western Christian church, contain many elements related to the modern concept of co-dependency. Whatever their value in the preindustrial cultures where they originated, these elements are now being questioned in present-day American society. Co-dependency theory points up incongruities between contemporary American values and traditional Christian patriarchy in certain key areas, among them the concept of self (including self-awareness, autonomy/agency, self-esteem, and the relationship of the self to others) and attitudes toward power and authority.

The core dysfunction in co-dependency has been identified as "the absence of a

relationship with self.”¹ This contemporary emphasis on an individuated sense of self is in part a reflection of the high value American society places on the autonomy and individual responsibility that are necessary for survival in present-day urban industrial culture. This is in contrast to the first century where survival was dependent on the resources of the extended family and the welfare of the family unit, rather than of the individual, was emphasized. Because of this shift in focus from the family to the individual, contemporary theorists label the closed, closely knit, undifferentiated family typical of the first century as an enmeshed family with unclear internal boundaries and see it as a social problem because it does not allow its members to develop the independence and autonomy necessary for survival in the modern world.

Similarly, modern society tends to see people as individuals, rather than as members of a family. Thus a sense of identity and self esteem dependent on relationships and the achievements of others is now viewed as dysfunctional. This is seen in definitions of co-dependence as, “a learned behavior, expressed by dependencies on people and things outside the self; these dependencies include neglecting and diminishing of one’s own identity,” and “a pattern of painful dependency on compulsive behaviors and on approval from others in an attempt to find safety, self worth and identity.”²

The church’s perpetuation of the first century emphasis on self-abnegation and enmeshed relationships has been especially problematic for women. The ancient honor/shame system gave men a role as active agents in both the public and private spheres, and through the centuries political and economic changes in Western society have moved social norms in the direction of greater and greater autonomy for males. Until very recently, however, women have remained in their ancient relational roles of daughter, wife, and mother, caring for others within the confines of the home, and maintaining the honor of the family, church, and society through their sexual purity and passivity. The strong social pressures that relegated them to the private world of home and family encouraged passivity and dependency, forced women to depend on familial relationships for their sense

¹ Kellogg, xix.

² National Council on Co-dependence (1990) and U. S. Journal pre-conference forum (1989) quoted in Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 10.

of identity and self-worth, and provided few opportunities for independent action.

Historically any move toward agency, autonomy, or public visibility by women has been seen as a threat to traditional family values and actively discouraged. Until very recently women's only legitimate functions outside the home were in care-giving roles. Thus, women's traditional role as nurturer and care-giver, expanded by the church to include responsibility for the moral behavior and psychological nurture of their husbands, has tended to reinforce women's sense of responsibility for the care and behavior of others. These cultural values were transmuted into religious values by early Christianity and through the generations women have been socialized by the church into attitudes and behaviors that are now seen as dysfunctional.

The perpetuation of the gender hierarchy of the first century has effected women's sense of self in other ways. Women's self-image and self-esteem has been shaped by the belief that they were inferior beings who were expected to be submissive to dominant males. Their voices were silenced, their perceptions discounted, their experiences devalued. Early Christianity accepted these cultural beliefs and intensified them with a theology that taught women that their inferiority was not simply a matter of social arrangement but a part of their very nature. They were incomplete humans, biologically, intellectually, morally and spiritually inferior to men. Their emotions and sexuality were suspect. Co-dependence theory labels the belief that one is inherently bad as shame and sees it as a key factor in dysfunctional relationships with the self, other people, and God.

Belief in a hierarchical ordering of society results in this damaging devaluation and shaming of the individual who is deemed inferior because of sex, age, race, and/ or class. It also effects families and social systems, predisposing to abuse and giving rise to the power and control issues so characteristic of co-dependence.

The authoritarian hierarchical structure of the traditional patriarchal family silences and disempowers women and children. Because of this they do not develop a sense of control over themselves or their environment, do not receive validation for their ideas and perceptions, and are forced to repress their feelings—all factors that are important in the development of co-dependence. Because overt power is exercised by dominant males,

subservient women and children must use the covert, manipulative techniques typical of co-dependence to gain any control over their lives.

The rules developed for the survival of the first century family--unquestioning obedience, control of feelings, suppression of individuality, silence about family problems, mistrust of anyone outside the family--are now considered characteristics of dysfunctional families. One definition of co-dependence as, "An emotional, psychological, and behavioral pattern of coping that develops as a result of an individual's prolonged exposure to, and practice of, a set of oppressive rules--rules which prevent the open expression of feeling, as well as the direct discussion of personal and interpersonal problems," points out the important role of these traditional rules in the development and perpetuation of co-dependency.³

Many factors in the first century family--the view of women and children as property, silence, internal enmeshment, closed external boundaries, unwillingness to acknowledge and discuss problems, unequal distribution of power, demand for unquestioning obedience, and use of violence as a means of social control--coupled with the church's glorification of passive suffering sets the stage for domestic violence and the psychological, physical, and sexual abuse of women and children.⁴ Practices formerly seen as essential to proper child rearing are now seen as abusive. In late twentieth-century America anyone following Luther's advice on discipline could well be arrested for child abuse. And abuse goes hand in hand with co-dependence, defined by one authority as, "a disease induced by child abuse, that leads to self-defeating relationships with the self and others."⁵

In these and other ways traditional views of the family, rooted in first-century Mediterranean culture and modified by the church, are incongruent with present-day democratic values that stress autonomy and equality, modern economic and social

³ Robert Subby (1984) quoted in Charles L. Whitfield, Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 9.

⁴ This is discussed in various chapters of Brown and Bohn. Alice Miller includes an example in "When Issac Arises from the Sacrificial Altar," The Untouched Key, trans. Hildegard Hannum and Hunter Hannum (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 137-45.

⁵ Snow and Willard, 15.

conditions, and current theories of child development. At the present time there is little consensus about appropriate family values and the optimum family structure or structures for contemporary American culture has not yet emerged. Nevertheless co-dependence theory joins feminist theory and other critiques to suggest that the traditional patriarchal family as it has been defined in Western Christianity for the last two thousand years is no longer a functional social institution able to provide a safe, healthy, and socially congruent environment for its members.

The contemporary identification of co-dependency as a problem might be seen as one symptom of the distress caused when a world-view developed in one historical and social situation is applied in a very different cultural context. This suggests that norms and behaviors that may have been functional in the preindustrial culture of the first century Mediterranean world have become maladaptive in contemporary American society which sees the individual rather than the family as the basic unit of survival and places a high value on autonomy and equality. Despite these signs of dis-ease much of the contemporary American church continues to promote patriarchal values and social systems that seem increasingly dysfunctional in late twentieth-century American society.

Contemporary Society

In Women's Reality, Anne Wilson Schaef discusses the pervasiveness of the patriarchal world view in modern American culture.⁶ Her description of the characteristics of patriarchy in contemporary life sounds surprisingly like the world-view of the first century Mediterranean and traditional Western Christianity: belief in innate, gender based inferiority and superiority, linkage of hierarchical control with the preservation of social order, reliance on the opinions of others for identity and self-worth, attempts to gain self-esteem by conforming to social norms, need for relationships to provide sense of wholeness, and a tendency to treat other people as objects.⁷

These values and beliefs are destructive to relationships and create problems for both women and men, but women are especially vulnerable. They stand outside the system

⁶ Schaef, Women's Reality, 58-62.

⁷ Schaef, Women's Reality, 9-50.

and receive little validation for their perceptions, feelings, and experience.⁸ They tend to internalize the pervasive message that women are innately and irredeemably inferior.⁹ As a result, they accept subordinate status, hate themselves and distrust other women, have difficulty developing a sense of self, feel like permanent outsiders, try to control through manipulation, need validation from males, and allow themselves to be defined by men, accepting and perpetuating patriarchal expectations and stereotypes.¹⁰

Despite the recent use of the term, it would seem that co-dependency is not such a new issue. The traits that are now labeled co-dependent look suspiciously like the traditional female gender role, built on long established Western beliefs about the nature and appropriate role of women, defining those attitudes and behaviors expected and valued in women by a patriarchal society organized as a gender hierarchy. Generations of women have been socialized into this role in traditional patriarchal families reinforced by patriarchal social structures.¹¹ It may be that women develop co-dependency to one degree or another simply because they are born into Western culture.

A short time ago co-dependent behavior seemed perfectly normal, at least in women, and is still viewed in this way by a large segment of society. Yet the increasing concern about co-dependency suggests that this pattern, which may have been functional at one time, no longer fits our world and is no longer producing psychologically healthy, functional people. Schaeff believes that this is so, and defines American society as an addictive system that is synonymous with a white male, or patriarchal, world-view. She sees the patriarchal family as equivalent to the addictive, dysfunctional family that tends to produce behavior labeled as co-dependency.¹²

Co-dependency might then be seen as an adaptation to a patriarchal society with

⁸ Schaeff, Women's Reality, 1-20.

⁹ Schaeff, Women's Reality, 23-27.

¹⁰ Schaeff, Women's Reality, 23-66.

¹¹ See Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978); Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, Understanding Women (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Karen Horney, Feminine Psychology (New York: Norton, 1967); and Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," Toward an Anthropology of Women, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review, 1975), 157-210.

¹² Schaeff, When Society Becomes an Addict.

roots in the assumptions and values of the Western patriarchal world view and the dynamics of the patriarchal family. At one time the attitudes and behavior now called co-dependent were seen by the culture as functional. The fact that this is no longer true may be one sign of an underlying paradigm shift. The old patriarchal model no longer fits the world as people experience it, and adaptations to patriarchy are now seen as illness or dysfunction. There are many complex reasons for this development.

On one level, the old roles and virtues are no longer functional, or even possible, for women. Changing social and economic conditions allow, or even require, active involvement in the public sphere. The employment of women outside the home has become commonplace and often necessary for economic survival. Changing technology and growth in service and white collar industries makes employment less dependent on physical strength. Professions become more open to women. As women gain access to financial resources through employment and inheritance their economic power increases. Money and the opportunity to vote provide the opening to political power, and women begin to be elected to political office and exert influence in the political sphere. Role models for women are no longer limited to wives and mothers. The popular media spreads new ideas, and increased social and geographic mobility breaks down isolation and allows escape from tradition-bound homes and communities.

The availability of birth control frees women from the burden of constant pregnancy at the same time industrialization and urbanization encourage small family size. The traditional nuclear family is no longer the predominant family system, and many women act as heads of household with sole responsibility for the support and nurture of their children. Survival, for women and families, no longer depends on passivity and seclusion but on active involvement with the world. And as some traditional virtues are abandoned others are called into question as well. Submission, obedience, silence, shyness, restraint, timidity, and unquestioning self-sacrifice no longer either useful or appealing.

On another level, the emergence of co-dependence is a symptom of an underlying problem, a clue to a fault line--the point of stress between the contemporary American value system as reflected in the co-dependence/recovery literature and traditional values preserved

in the patriarchal world view. The chart below points up some of these differences.

<u>Contemporary/Recovery</u>	<u>Traditional Patriarchy</u>
Autonomy	Paternalism
Individual centered	Group centered
Introspective	Exterior orientation
Interior locus of control	Exterior locus of control
Limitless good	Limited good
Change, growth	Permanence
Flexible stability	Rigid stability
Geographic and social mobility	Geographic and social stability
Open social networks	Closed social networks
Democratic decision making	Autocratic decision making
Cooperation	Dominance/submission
Non-violence	Violence
Equal opportunity	Unequal opportunity
Open expression of feelings	Rigid control of feelings
Open communication	Silence

This is an oversimplification--the world does not fit into such clear-cut dichotomies--but it serves to illustrate the gulf in beliefs and values that has developed over the years and may be contributing to the break up of the old patriarchal consensus.

On an even deeper level, the questioning of patriarchal beliefs and values may signal a growing awareness, even among dominant groups, that the old hierarchical system may not only be unnecessary, but may indeed be a threat to survival. There is a recognition that the use of violence to solve problems and exert control; autocratic decision making; rigid, closed systems that resist change; and the domination and exploitation of people and nature may be dangerous to nations and the world, as well as to families. A patriarchy that is no longer seen as necessary to survival loses its sacredness. And as this happens, people begin to ask questions and look for alternatives.

The critique of patriarchy began in marginal groups that were outside the system and could see it more clearly--women, racial and cultural minorities, gays and lesbians. It has now expanded to include peace activists, environmentalists, theologians, economists, educators, physical and social scientists--and many others who are concerned about

survival and the quality of human life. Feminist scholars are involved in an ongoing critique of patriarchy in society and in Christianity. And, as all this is happening, there are outbursts of conservatism as traditionalists struggle to hold on to what is old, familiar, and useful to them.

We are living in an interim time when the old world view is breaking down and the new is still unformed--a time of danger and of opportunity. What are the implications for the American Christian church, particularly in relationship to co-dependency?

Church

The Christian church shares in the co-dependency of contemporary society both as a contributor to its development and as a social institution suffering from its effects. The preceding historical review supports the contention of Schaef, Whitfield and others that the Christian church has contributed to the development of co-dependence in individuals, families, and social institutions. The church has not only legitimized and perpetuated the world view and social structures of the Mediterranean culture in which it developed but has also contributed doctrines that have added to the co-dependency producing potential of this patriarchal world view. Many of these continue to be important in the theology, ethics, and practice of contemporary American Christianity.

Schaef and Dominican theologian Matthew Fox have identified the dysfunctional co-dependence of the church itself. Schaef describes the church as an addictive organization characterized by "self-centeredness, dishonesty, preoccupation with control, abnormal thinking processes, confusion, denial, perfectionism, judgmentalism, repressed feelings and ethical deterioration." She goes on to note that "this addictive process can be seen as part of what Jesus called 'principalities and powers.'"¹³

She describes four types of addictive behavior, all of which contribute to the dysfunction of the contemporary church. One is the addiction of church leaders to a substance or a process, "work, sex, romance, self-abuse, power or money."¹⁴ The second occurs when others react to this addictive person in co-dependent ways. This response is almost inevitable because people who grew up in dysfunctional families tend to repeat these

¹³ Schaef, "Is the Church an Addictive Organization?" 18.

¹⁴ Schaef, "Is the Church an Addictive Organization?" 18.

familiar behavior patterns in adult situations which recall the dynamics of their families of origin.

In the third type a person becomes addicted to the work, mission, or promise of the organization itself. As an example, Schaef describes how the promise of the church to be a family can play into the needs and behavior patterns of co-dependent persons. She goes on to note the special danger of this type of addiction: "The church is especially vulnerable to these types of addictions. Even when their addiction is to a good cause, a good organization or a worthy promise, addicts lose touch with their spirituality and their relationship to God; the addiction takes over their life, their relationships and their being."¹⁵

In the fourth type "the organization itself functions as an addict" with such symptoms as "incongruity between what the organization says its mission is and what it actually does" and a preoccupation with control.¹⁶ Examples of all these types could be found within almost any denomination from local congregations to national and international bodies.

Fox uses Schaef's co-dependent addictive organization model to critique contemporary Roman Catholicism, comparing the church to a dysfunctional family characterized by dualism and patriarchy, "where the alcoholic father . . . is always appeased and placated in hopes that he will not become violent yet another time."¹⁷ He cites the familiar signs of dysfunctional co-dependent behavior as characteristics of the contemporary church: silence, suffering, misuse of power, sexual repression/obsession, misogyny, "illusions of grandiosity" and control, indirect communication, forgetfulness, refusal to engage in self-evaluation and self-criticism, and isolation.¹⁸ While the specifics may differ, Fox's analysis could be related to many religious organizations including the

¹⁵ Schaef, "Is the Church an Addictive Organization?" 20. This type of religious addiction is receiving increasing attention in recovery literature. See Leo Booth, When God Becomes a Drug: Breaking the Chains of Religious Addiction and Abuse (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1991); and Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton, Toxic Faith: Understanding and Overcoming Religious Addiction (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1991).

¹⁶ Schaef, "Is the Church an Addictive Organization?" 20-21.

¹⁷ Matthew Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family?" Creation (November-December 1989): 28-29.

¹⁸ Fox, 28-31.

Anglican church.

Anglicanism

In the five centuries since the Reformation the Anglican church has moved from an uncritical acceptance of the patriarchal tradition of Western Christianity to discussion and debate about issues that threaten the foundations of this ideology. Although some changes have been made, resistance remains strong and the Episcopal church continues as a patriarchal institution that has not yet grappled with the basic issue of patriarchy and the role it plays in producing suffering and dysfunctional behavior.

Despite its shortcomings, the Anglican tradition does have a history of flexibility and reasonableness that has allowed it to respond, however slowly and reluctantly, to changing conditions in the church and society. Over the centuries Anglicanism has developed a world view that allows for movement away from the rigid structures of patriarchy. Urban Holmes suggests that this is a “dominantly feminine” consciousness, characterized by sensibility or the consideration of the total context of an experience, empiricism, comprehensiveness, and the ability to see both darkness and light. He further describes this Anglican consciousness as “left hand thinking . . . intuitive, analogical, metaphorical, symbolic and characteristic of poetry, art, and music.”¹⁹ This consciousness is reflected in all aspects of the church’s life, including its theological reflection and decision making process.

Factors first articulated in the post-Reformation church--authority based in scripture, tradition, reason, and experience; a preference for dialogue, compromise, and balance rather than dogmatism and extremist positions; an openness to the surrounding society--have been evident in the discussions and decisions of the subsequent centuries. They have been both the greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses of the Anglican system, but in balance can provide a foundation for constructive change away from the old co-dependency producing system to a more functional environment for individuals and institutions.

Although one or another party within the church may emphasize one of the four

¹⁹ Urban T. Holmes III, What is Anglicanism? (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), 4.

foundations for authority--tradition, scripture, experience, or reason--the church as a whole has usually managed to consider all of them in determining its theological and moral positions. This can be a slow and often imprecise process that rarely breaks new ground. But it does allow input from many sources and often provides a balanced result.

Over time the locus of authority in Anglicanism has tended to become less centralized and more inclusive, moving from crown, parliament, and bishops to include lay men and finally lay women. In the United States in particular there has been a tendency for real authority to rest in a diffuse sense of "the mind of the church," and the canons and resolutions passed by General Convention are likely to reflect a general consensus within both lay and clerical orders. This is one reason that change in the church seems to come as a reaction to change in the wider society--consciously or unconsciously the church as a whole has evaluated the change and decided if and how it will be reflected in the church. This is an imperfect method. Change is often slow, but it is possible. And when it occurs such change is often accepted by the mainstream of the church with surprising ease.

This is one of the advantages of decision making by consensus, and the broader the participation in the consensus, the more of the church that is represented in the discussion, the more readily decisions are accepted. Frequent calls for study and dialogue about controversial issues are one example of this processes. This can be a strategy for blocking and postponing change, but it can also legitimize discussion, provide a forum for emerging or unpopular viewpoints, and lead to clarification of issues and development of strategies for change. Often the tendency to postpone a decision must be overcome through pressure from inside or outside the church. The whole series of steps leading to the approval of women's ordination is one example of this process.

Often discussion is superficial and fails to grapple with real issues. The importance placed on unity may lead to indecisiveness, postponement of controversial decisions, or watered down compromises. But this process of dialogue and compromise does allow proponents of diverse viewpoints to voice their concerns while remaining in communion within the church.

From the beginning, whether as the established church or one of many voices in a

pluralist culture, the Anglican church has been serious about its responsibility to the larger society. Whether by necessity as a political and quasi-governmental organization, or because of a temperament congenial to learning and reasonable discourse, or because it has interpreted the gospel as a call to social action, the church has had an open relationship to with the society around it. Ideas have flowed back and forth between church and civil government, pulpit and university, church and culture.

At its worst this can result in a uncritical acceptance of social values and legitimization of questionable beliefs and values. At best it can be a prophetic voice for positive change in society and the church. Examples of both extremes can be seen in the current debate on women's ordination and the nineteenth century debate over slavery where Anglicans led the anti-slavery movement in England and supported slavery in the United States. Because of this complex relationship with society, Anglicans have a very acute sense of the tension noted earlier between religion as the legitimization and "embodiment of ideological and institutional" oppression and religion "as a transcendent and liberating force."²⁰

The whole question of the relationship between church and society and the interplay between tradition and change influenced by individual and societal experience has come into sharp focus in the controversy over women's ordination where one side advocates change in response to changing societal values and the other sees this as an abandonment of the received faith. Traditionalists believe that patriarchal values are an essential element of Christian faith, while advocates of change view patriarchy itself a social value once adopted by the church but no longer necessary or desirable in the modern world. A compromise has been reached that allows each side to go its own way, but given the very basic conflicts involved this seems to be only a temporary truce. The clear articulation, exploration, and resolution of this conflict is one of the major tasks facing Anglicanism in the years ahead.

Although many retain and articulate traditional viewpoints, mainstream Anglicanism has moved away from co-dependent-like to more functional dynamics in a several areas. This can be seen in the key twentieth century decisions about liturgical renewal and the

²⁰ Malmgreen, introduction, 6-7.

ordination of women. Here, the changing teaching on the nature of humans and the liturgical shift away from penitence to reconciliation has led to a decreased emphasis on human guilt, shame, and unworthiness to a view of humans created in the image of God, worthy of respect and honor. Similarly a different view of God—less wrathful and more loving, less interested in dominance and submission, seeking relationship and reconciliation rather than obedience and fear—has less negative implications for self-image and provides a more positive model for parenting and other human relationships.

Reflecting changing social conditions, male dominance and female submission, long the unquestioned pattern for Christian marriage, has shifted to a more egalitarian view. The church's stand on the ordination of women has affirmed the belief that women are fully human, completely reflecting the image of God, and capable of the whole range of human activity. However much traditional role expectations may linger in practice, official Anglicanism seems to have accepted the social movement toward the equality of women and racial minorities. The task of actualizing these new attitudes and values within the life and structure of the church remains a major challenge at all levels of the organization.

Liturgical renewal is beginning to reflect a greater sensitivity to the importance of language and symbol, and is exploring ways to express the experiences and insights of women and racial and cultural minorities. This promising development needs to be expanded and extended to include other oppressed groups who tend to remain invisible and voiceless—the poor and working class, children, old people, disabled, sexual minorities. Movements toward equality tend to create some dislocation and role confusion, but have positive influence on identity and self-acceptance and tend to encourage opportunities for self-expression, creativity, and achievement outside the traditional areas of interpersonal relationships and self sacrificial service.

All of these have been beginning steps, and the final direction of the church is unclear. There are a number of unfinished tasks. Co-dependence continues to create pain and dysfunction in individuals, families, and in the church itself. The church cannot continue to ignore this if it to be an effective institution true to its mission “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ . . . as it prays and worships, proclaims

the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love.”²¹ Basic changes are necessary if the American Episcopal church is to proclaim the Gospel of justice and love in ways that are congruent with the social reality of the late twentieth century and the needs and experience of contemporary women and men.

Historically Anglicanism has been open to change and some enabling processes are in place. More will be required. The basic question is one of will. An examination of patriarchy and its role in the church will require a willingness to question deeply held beliefs and a commitment to basic change in the culture of the church.

Substantive change will begin when the church recognizes the seriousness of co-dependence and is willing to begin systematic study of the problem. The patriarchal roots of co-dependency (as well as related issues such as racism, sexism, classism, and the abuse of women and children) need to be explored and acknowledged. At this point the church will be forced to address the basic question—is patriarchy an essential part of the Christian faith? Is change possible and, if it is, is the church willing to change? The answer can only come from serious examination of theological, biblical and historical scholarship and from careful listening to the experience of all its people.

If the church decides that it wishes to remain a patriarchal system it must either ignore co-dependency and related problems or decide how to respond to them within a patriarchal, hierarchical framework. If the church is able to entertain the possibility of moving beyond patriarchy and willing to make a serious commitment to the exploration of alternatives it is ready to begin a process of culture change.

A process similar to the institutional change model used by diversity consultant Elsie Cross to help industrial corporations deal with racism and sexism might be modified for use in the church. Cross’s model, designed to bring about lasting change in white male corporate culture, deals with realities of power distribution and helps white males take responsibility “for the prerogatives around power and their privileges as majority-group members.”²²

²¹ Responses to the questions “What is the mission of the Church?” and “How does the Church pursue its mission?” in the Catechism, Episcopal Church, Book of Common Prayer (1979), 855.

²² J. P. White, “Diversity’s Champion,” Los Angeles Times Magazine, 9 August 1992: 16.

The two step process, awareness and culture change, takes place over a period of several years. Awareness begins with workshops that help participants “see how racism and sexism operate in their lives, lets them experience the shame, defensiveness and fear surrounding their attitudes, prompts them to examine the myths and stereotypes that support these isms and provides specific tools--as well as a new belief in risk and hope--to combat them.”²³ Change strategies are developed as the groups list basic assumptions, recognize how these assumptions create barriers for some people and advantages for others, and identify ways that barriers can be lowered and power can be shared. Culture change begins as these suggestions are implemented. Effective change requires commitment and accountability at all levels of the organization.

The church could follow a similar process of developing awareness that would lead to recognition and repentance of individual and corporate sin and the desire to make the necessary amendments in the life of the church and its members. This would lay the groundwork for the development of new theological and scriptural models to provide a basis for change in the worship, pastoral care, and organizational life of the church.

This is not likely occur in an orderly, linear fashion, but rather develop as an interplay between all the areas of the church’s life. If the church is to continue to be Anglican, rather than evolve into something quite different, the process of change will need to be congruent with the Anglican ethos. This would include openness to many points of view, dialogue, discussion, careful weighing of alternatives, avoiding extremes, seeking compromise where this is possible, keeping the best of the past while being responsive to society and open to change. This process will be slow and will not please everyone, but is likely to result in more permanent and less divisive change.

To be effective, the change process will need to involve both long term efforts to make basic changes in theology and organizational structures, as well as short term actions to alleviate immediate problems until structural change allows for more permanent solutions. As part of its long term activities, Anglican theology and biblical study must reconsider basic questions about the nature of God and from this develop an understanding

²³ White, 16.

of the relationship between God and humans and humans with each other. Creation, nature, sin, and salvation--these and many other areas need to be looked at in new ways that are no longer andro and ethnocentric and give serious consideration to the insights of feminist and other liberation theologies and creation spirituality.

Is this possible? One contemporary theologian, Owen Thomas, feels that Anglican theology is flexible enough to change, but that its patriarchal tradition will make this a slow and tension filled process.²⁴ As part of this process important Christian concepts--sin, suffering, responsibility, sacrifice, service, power through powerlessness--need to be reclaimed from superficial and/or co-dependency producing interpretations if they are to speak in powerful ways to contemporary human experience.

The Anglican church needs to give careful thought to its hierarchical structure. The opening of clerical orders to women and the increased participation of laity of both sexes in church government and worship has resulted in a sharing of the power formerly held by male clergy and influential laymen. Yet, as noted above, hierarchies by their very nature have great potential to encourage and perpetuate dysfunctional and co-dependent behavior in individuals and institutions. On the other hand, recognition of the different functions, and perhaps even different natures, of the four orders has had some confirmation in human experience and has proved to be a viable and unifying factor over the centuries. This raises a number of interesting questions, not the least of which is, Is it possible to have an Episcopal church without bishops? Is it possible to retain the four orders in a non-hierarchical organizational structure? What are alternative forms of organization? Which will better enable the church to be the people of Christ in the twenty-first century?

Until these and other major theological and structural questions can be resolved there are a number of short term steps that can be taken to alleviate some of the pain of co-dependence and correct some of the church's co-dependency producing situations.

Liturgical commissions can continue to move in the direction of inclusivity and seek ways to give voice to the experience of all its members. The messages conveyed by all elements of the liturgy--words and especially biblical passages, actions, participants,

²⁴ Owen C. Thomas, "Feminist Theology and Anglican Theology," *Anglican Theological Review* 68, no. 2 (April 1986): 125-37.

architecture, music, vestments, art--need to be examined and modified as necessary. The search for inclusive symbol and metaphor should continue. New rites can be developed to acknowledge and affirm the experience of all the people and connect them to their own internal processes and to the love and reconciling power of God and each other. The possibilities are many: celebrations of new jobs and retirement and the beginning and end of relationships; liturgies of penance for exploiting others and for accepting exploitation and powerlessness; healing services for physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.

All persons in the church, and especially those who are involved in counseling, Christian education, and youth work, should be educated about co-dependency. They need to know proper techniques for assessment, intervention, and referral for individuals and families. And they need to be able to assess and intervene in their own organizations. Committees, prayer groups, parishes, dioceses, the national church--all can and do exhibit dysfunctional, co-dependent behavior and dealing with this in an open and honest way can do much to improve the health and functioning of the participants and the organizations themselves.

A major contributor to this dysfunctional pattern in the Anglican church has been its continuing dependence on an ideal family as the model to describe its communal life. Although many congregations have expanded their vision beyond the Victorian model, the language is still there, "the church family," "father," and now "mother." Whether intended or not, this language carries powerful messages that can encourage dysfunctional transference and co-dependency. Both the church and the contemporary society are searching for intimacy. Both are still limited to thinking of closeness in familial or sexual terms. The church can help itself and society by searching for new language and new models that can speak of intimacy and community in healthy and life giving ways.

The church's willingness to talk about co-dependency and identify and correct its own co-dependent behavior can be a positive example for its people. The church community can learn, practice, and model other functional behaviors: recognition and expression of feelings, open and direct communication, inclusiveness, power sharing, and non-exploitative relationships. The church can support self-help groups for addicts and

co-dependents and explore ways that the insights of the recovery movement might be adapted and used by the church.

Will any of this take place? Some of the short term steps are already being taken in some places and may well become more widespread as the increasing awareness of co-dependence in the general society impacts the church. The fate of long term theological and structural change is less clear. There are several possibilities.

Change would be most likely to occur if the church is able to openly identify the problem of patriarchy, repent of its past sins, and make a clear commitment to change. Some change might occur in a slower, less complete, and less focused way if the church simply continues its present pattern of responding to overt issues and social change by institutionalizing “the mind of the church” through actions of General Convention. Or it may find itself immobilized by dissent, lethargy, or fear of change. The result has important implications for the future of the church.

The next chapter provides an example of one interim response to a co-dependency related issue—the need to connect with the spiritual concerns of women—using insights from feminist theory and the recovery movement. The concluding chapter discusses implications for the church in the next century.

CHAPTER 6

Women's Spirituality: Co-dependent and Otherwise

Introduction

Co-dependency theory can provide a framework for critiquing traditional patriarchal Christianity. It can also be useful in suggesting other ways to present the Christian message, ways that are in harmony with the ideals of equality, justice, and wholeness that are valued by American culture and are also congruent with alternative voices within the Christian tradition. This chapter gives one example of this process, using insights from the co-dependence recovery movement and feminist theory to critique patriarchal spirituality and to explore ways the church might respond more effectively to the spiritual needs of women.

A growing number of contemporary American women in and out of the church are using the concept of co-dependence to describe their experience of dis-ease, a sense of dislocation in relationships with the self, other people and God that is often experienced in a variety of painful and dysfunctional ways that involve the whole person--body, mind, and spirit. A similar sense of dislocation echoes through the writings of feminist theologians as they reflect on the experience of women in Western Christianity. I sense truth in both these areas as I listen to my own voice and the voices of other women--students, their clients in mental health clinics, parishioners, support group members--as we tell the stories of our lives as women in late twentieth century America.

Perhaps writers on co-dependence and feminist theologians are using different vocabularies and conceptual models to describe a common experience of oppression in a patriarchal culture.¹ As discussed previously, many of these issues seem to be surfacing now in a time of paradigm shift when the old world view is breaking down and previously

¹ Although many men also write in this area, it is interesting to note that many of the early writers whose work form the foundation for co-dependence theory (Karen Horney, Virginia Satir, Alice Miller), many of the earliest writers about co-dependence (Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, Claudia Black) and current best selling authors in the field (Melanie Beattie, Anne Wilson Schaef, and others) are women. Charles Whitfield gives a comprehensive overview of the historical background of co-dependence in Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition, 13-23, 45-46. Schaef includes a brief discussion in Co-Dependence: Misunderstood--Mistreated, 7-16.

unquestioned truths are open for discussion. Perhaps women are among the first to recognize the issues and raise the questions because they look at the dominant culture as outsiders who have been particularly impacted by the gender based hierarchy implicit in traditional Western culture.

Women writing from a secular viewpoint often characterize the process of recovery from co-dependence as a spiritual journey. Discussing the twelve steps of recovery Melanie Beattie writes, "This is a spiritual program. . . . We are spiritual beings. We need a spiritual program."² Anne Wilson Schaef notes, "Recovery from the disease of co-dependence is impossible without recognizing and working with spiritual issues as healing issues."³

The fact that the concept of co-dependence provides an acceptable conceptual framework for contemporary women to explore spiritual issues may be a reflection of our psychological age, but also may be a reaction to the failure of the traditional church to speak to the experience of women. As noted above, the church, with its androcentric focus and patriarchal world view, often has not only failed to address the spiritual issues of women, but has actively taught and reinforced co-dependent attitudes and behaviors, labeling them as the spiritual ideal, especially for women. An increasing number of women are turning to Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA), Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA), and other similar programs for spiritual support and growth. These groups are obviously connecting with the needs and experience of many women in a way that the church is not.

Reflection on the spirituality of the co-dependence recovery movement may be useful in several ways. For one, it can provide an outside viewpoint for critiquing traditional Christian spirituality. In addition, insights from the recovery movement may suggest new approaches to spiritual issues for women seeking healing and wholeness within a Christian context and may help the church respond more effectively to the spiritual needs of contemporary women. This is especially important if the church is to minister to women who feel alienated from a church which at worst actively contributes to their oppression and at best seems out of touch with their reality and concerns.

² Melody Beattie, Codependent No More (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 172.

³ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 96.

The observation of Schaef that her recovery from co-dependence is congruent with her feminist beliefs suggests that there may be similarities between the spirituality of the recovery movement and feminist theology.⁴ This chapter compares the spirituality of co-dependence recovery with traditional Western Christian spirituality, explores the intersections of recovery concepts and feminist theology, and begins to identify ways insights from these disciplines can impact the spirituality of contemporary Christian women in positive ways.

Spirituality

There are commonalities between traditional Christian spirituality and co-dependence recovery. Both recognize the centrality of right relationships with self, others and God and the importance of wholeness, whether imaged as health or salvation. They differ in their understanding of what constitutes right relationships. Both recognize a similar process involving recognizing deep and unmanageable problems in one's life, turning to God, acknowledging wrongs, seeking reconciliation, continuing to deepen one's relationship to God, and living out new understandings in everyday life.

While both see surrender to God as a key point in this process, they envision different outcomes, as traditional Christianity stresses the power of God and the negation of self, while the recovery movement emphasizes surrender into the care of God who supports, guides, and empowers the self. Differences between the two spiritualities are the result of, among other things, different views of God and the relationship between God and humans and their different answers to the question of whether turning to God involves turning away from self. The following discussion explores these areas in more detail with the goal of raising questions, identifying areas for further study, and suggesting guidelines for developing attractive and helpful spiritual programs for Christian women who wish to remain within the organized church.

Views of God

Traditional Christian theology begins with a clearly defined view of the nature of God, from which its view of human nature and spirituality is derived. In contrast,

⁴ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 4.

spirituality based in the recovery movement, like feminist theology, begins with human experience and discovers the nature of God in the process of reflecting and acting on that experience.

The traditional Christian view of God can be found in the creeds and doctrinal statements of the church. This statement from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England is representative of the orthodox formulation, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible."⁵ Traditional spirituality places high value on the powerful, unchanging, disembodied, unfeeling perfection that it attributes to God.

The Westminster Confession further emphasizes the distance and power differential between God and humans, stating that God

hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory, in, by, unto and upon them: he hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth.⁶

This use of male pronouns underlines the traditional patriarchal assumption that God is male. A contemporary reflection of this understanding is found in the 1988 arguments against the ordination of women in the Church of England: "Male humanity reflects God known through creation and revelation in a way that female humanity does not."⁷

It is not surprising that contemporary women often find it difficult to relate to this distant, powerful, perfect, unchanging, unfeeling male God who does not fully image their humanity. This understanding of God not only alienates women and legitimizes sexist oppression, but also encourages the sense of inferiority and shame, the discounting of self, alienation from the body, powerlessness and dependency that characterize co-dependence.

The concept of God is important in the recovery movement but specific definition of

⁵ N. H. G. Robinson and D. W. D. Shaw, "God," Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, 231.

⁶ Robinson and Shaw, 231.

⁷ Church of England, General Synod, 26-27, 35.

the term is not. Recovery communities have formed around common problems rather than around religious beliefs, and a distinction is made between formal religion and spirituality.⁸ So less importance is placed on religious conformity and room is made for a wide range of individual beliefs. People begin in a variety of places and their concept of God tends to evolve during the recovery process. There is no pressure for conformity.

When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. . . . At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was.⁹

So general terms are used. CoDA uses God, other groups use other terms. As Schaef notes, "Some people say our Higher Power or Power Greater than Ourselves; some say our living process; some say our spirituality. Whatever works. The original language [of AA] is sexist and limited."¹⁰ The co-dependence literature reflects this pragmatic approach, and uses a variety of terms.

In a similar way the nature of God is not explicitly defined but is discussed in different ways. John Bradshaw describes "something greater than yourself" that can be sensed in creation.¹¹ Whitfield talks about "Divine Mystery" and "the creative, unconditional love of our Higher Power."¹² Schaef sees God as process, "Process is never constant or static. Our natural, human process is god--yet god is not just our process (paradox!). To live and follow our personal life process is to be with god."¹³

God may be imaged in a variety of ways:

For some it is the image of a wise old being; for others it may be a sphere of light, a guardian angel, or a spirit guide. For some it is experienced as a part of the self; for others it will be something outside of the self. The image may be based on religious beliefs, appearing in the form of Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, or a guru; others may experience it as an abstract symbol of a Higher Self such as a cross or a

⁸ Beattie, *Beyond Codependency*, 239.

⁹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd. ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1976), 47.

¹⁰ Schaef, *Co-Dependence*, 31.

¹¹ John Bradshaw, *Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child* (New York: Bantam, 1990), 264-65.

¹² Whitfield, *Co-dependence: Healing the Human Condition*, 241, 244.

¹³ Schaef, *Women's Reality*, 167-68.

mandala, or the intuitive or spiritual part of the self within you. Some may picture it as an aspect of nature or a group to which one belongs.¹⁴

These definitions are deliberately vague to allow individuals to appropriate whatever is helpful for them and whatever resonates with their experience--“God as we understand” God.¹⁵ Such an approach, while perhaps disturbing to traditional Christians, shares the feminist openness to a variety of voices and respect for individual experience, and is able to accommodate the beliefs of both traditional and feminist Christians. It is compatible with feminist theology which emphasizes the importance of the search for alternative images of God and focuses on women’s experience rather than specific creedal formulations to define the nature of God.

The God-Human Relationship

Traditional androcentric Christian spirituality uses a hierarchical relationship model to structure its ideal God-human relationship as one of dominance and submission. Humans by nature are sinful and rebellious and in need of control. Because of women’s inferior status in the hierarchy and their role in the Fall they require control from both God and men. Pride is seen as the greatest sin and humility, passivity, and obedience are highly valued. The voice of traditional Christian spirituality, speaking through Jeremy Taylor and Thomas à Kempis, reflects these concerns that are still taught, explicitly or implicitly, in many churches today. For example, a contemporary manual for associates of an American Anglican religious order for women states, “Let the Associates pay their devotion to the Humility of the Son of God; and since He made it the basis of His life, let them make it the basis of their own. It is the mother of many virtues.”¹⁶

In this model God is encountered through self-abasement. Thomas à Kempis writes, “But if I despise myself and set myself at naught and think myself but ashes and dust, as I am, your grace will enter into my heart, so that all presumption and pride in me will be drowned in the valley of meekness, through perfect knowledge of my

¹⁴ Cathryn Taylor, 243.

¹⁵ From the 12 Steps of AA quoted in Shaef, *Co-Dependence*, 30.

¹⁶ *Manual of the Associates of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity* (N. p.: Sisters of the Holy Nativity, n. d.), 24.

wretchedness.”¹⁷

The appeal of such an approach to contemporary women (or men for that matter) is doubtful and its contribution to the loss of self that is central to co-dependence is self-evident. Taylor’s ideal Christian--the humble man distrusting himself, relying on the judgment of others, obeying commands without question, complying with “public customs . . . meek and indifferent . . . patiently bear[ing] injuries,” always unsatisfied with his decisions and behavior--would clearly be considered co-dependent by today’s standards.¹⁸ Yet these assumptions, although usually stated in more palatable language, underlie much of traditional spirituality.

The spirituality of the recovery movement has very different assumptions based on a broader and more experiential view of God and a relationship model that is egalitarian rather than hierarchical. The importance of inclusiveness, mutuality, shared leadership and decision making are modeled in recovery communities and expressed in formal group norms.¹⁹ The power for healing found in the mutual sharing and support and positive role modeling found in self-help groups is an important part of the recovery process.

The quality of interpersonal relationships are a core issue in co-dependence. Humans are seen as relational beings, intimately connected in a matrix of relationships that, depending on their nature, can either contribute to health and wholeness or to sickness and dysfunction. Moving from dysfunctional to healthy relationships is seen as an important part of recovery. These healthy relationships are characterized by one author as including: “healthy detachment, honesty, self-love, love for each other, tackling problems, negotiating differences, and being flexible . . . acceptance, forgiveness, a sense of humor, an empowering but realistic attitude, open communication, respect, tolerance, patience, and faith in a Higher Power.”²⁰

¹⁷ à Kempis, 116-17.

¹⁸ Jeremy Taylor, 85-86.

¹⁹ The Twelve Traditions of CoDA include: “1) Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity. 2) For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving higher power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3) The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.” Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous (Phoenix: Co-Dependents Anonymous, 1988), 5.

²⁰ Beattie, Beyond Codependency, 143.

Although this description refers to human-to-human relationships, it also seems to reflect to some degree the recovery movement's view of the relationship between God and humans. Humans are spiritual beings who can connect with God, and this connection is seen as essential to recovery. Although humans may be wounded and alienated and may harm others through their dysfunctional behavior, they can grow and change with the help of God as a source of support that enables people to face and deal with their problems. Both the action of God and human agency, working together, are important in this process.

The concept of a self, seen as an innate given of human beings, is a key element in the spirituality of the co-dependence movement. While there is no clear definition of the term, the co-dependence literature seems to use self and true self interchangeably in a context that suggests a sense of integrity or wholeness, a conscious awareness and connection with values and internal processes (feelings, perceptions, memories, etc.), as differentiated from roles (the conscious assumption of different ways of behaving in different situations), and false self (the unconscious assumption of a facade in order to please or placate others). In a complete reversal of traditional Christianity's focus on self-abnegation, a major goal of recovery spirituality is the discovery and affirmation of the true self.

In the recovery model God is encountered in the search for the self. An individual develops a sense of God through the process of recovery—as persons become more and more in touch with their own truth they become more and more in touch with God. “In the discovery of ourselves, we will ultimately find God.”²¹ “To live and follow our personal life process is to be with god.”²²

This understanding of God-human relationships has much in common with feminist approaches. Both see humans as relational beings and affirm an egalitarian model of relationships characterized by mutuality and inclusiveness. Both react against the “alienated power” described by Carter Heyward that destroys relationships with the self and others. With Heyward and Rita Nakashima Brock, the recovery movement affirms shared power

²¹ Leo Booth, *Spirituality and Recovery*, rev. ed. (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1988), 86.

²² Schaef, *Women's Reality*, 167-68.

and finds power for healing and wholeness in healthy, mutually empowering relationships.²³ The distinction between spirituality and formal religion is echoed throughout feminist theology, and the formation of spiritual communities outside the church is discussed by Rosemary Radford Ruether among others.²⁴

In general, feminist spirituality seems more concerned with the individual in community than with the self. However, Judith Plaskow suggests interesting parallels with co-dependence theory when she reverses the assumptions of traditional Christian theology and defines the failure to develop a self as a basic sin rather than a virtue.²⁵ In her discussion Plaskow also assumes the presence of a self and seems to understand the concept in ways that are similar to co-dependence theory. Her use of self, too, implies a sense of wholeness and a connection with one's own experience--feelings, perceptions, memories, and beliefs. While both concepts recognize the importance of responsibility and choice, Plaskow seems to make this more central to her concept of the self. She contrasts responsible self-creation with self-negation and the passive acceptance of societal expectations and roles--a concept similar to the differentiation between true and false self. This sense of alienation from the true self is identified as a core condition by both Plaskow and co-dependence theory.

In both feminist theology and recovery spirituality, God is present with humans rather than distant, and God is found, rather than received from an outside source. Although feminists focus on the discovery of God in community and co-dependence literature focuses on encountering God within the process of recovery, these are not mutually exclusive concepts. Perhaps they reflect different facets of women's experience which are brought together in this observation by Heyward, "The Sacred reveals herself to us when we are ready to see her--ready, that is to see more clearly ourselves in right relation."²⁶

²³ See Heyward, *Touching Our Strength*; and Brock, *Journeys by Heart*.

²⁴ See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

²⁵ See Plaskow, 151.

²⁶ Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 30.

Spiritual Formation

Differing views of God, humans, and relationships have shaped diametrically opposed approaches to spiritual formation. The goal of traditional Christian spirituality is union with God through negation of the self, while co-dependence recovery seeks to recover and reclaim a lost self, and encounters God in the process.

Traditional Christianity has sought to reach its goal by emphasizing obedience to an external, all powerful, unfeeling, unchanging God and teaching an otherworldly spirituality that encourages self-abasement, self-abnegation, suspicion of passion and physicality, and isolation from the world of persons and matter.

Taylor and à Kempis describe a typical spiritual process that seeks to develop their ideal Christian. Self-abasement and self-hatred are a cornerstone of this spiritual formation. Taylor counsels:

Believe thyself an unworthy person heartily. . . . Love to be concealed and little esteemed; be content to want praise, never being troubled when thou art slighted or undervalued; for thou canst not undervalue thyself. . . . Take no content in praise when it is offered thee. . . . Never compare thyself with others, unless it be to advance them and to depress thyself. To which purpose we must be sure in some sense or other to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come. . . . Every day call to mind one of thy foulest sins, or the most shameful of thy disgraces.²⁷

Similarly à Kempis teaches that:

The highest and most profitable learning is this: that a man have a truthful knowledge and a full despising of himself
O, how humbly and how abjectly ought I therefore to estimate myself. How much ought I, in my heart, despise myself.²⁸

He counsels patient acceptance of suffering which he sees as a gift from God.

A truly patient man gives no heed from whom he suffers . . . but whenever any adversity or wrong befalls him, whatever it be, no matter from whom it comes or how often it comes, he takes all faithfully from the hand of God, and accounts it as a rich gift and a great benefit.²⁹

He encourages obedient submission to others, "Study, my son, to fulfill another man's will rather than your own. . . . Seek, also the lowest place, and desire to be under others rather

²⁷ Jeremy Taylor, 76-78, 81.

²⁸ à Kempis, 33, 125.

²⁹ à Kempis, 132.

than above them,” believing, “It is a great thing to be obedient, to live under authority and to seek our own liberty in nothing.”³⁰

He echoes the patriarchal body/spirit dualism and fear of physicality, viewing the passions of the body as “miseries of life” and a threat to spiritual growth.

The greatest hindrance to heavenly contemplation is that we are not yet clearly delivered from all passions and concupiscence. . . .

A man profits most and wins most grace in those things in which he has most overcome himself, and in which he has most subjected his body to his soul.³¹

People, creation, and the self are untrustworthy. True spirituality turns inward, away from the world of human relationships and matter:

He is vain who puts his trust in man or in any created thing. . . trust not in yourself, but set all your trust in God. . . .

Learn to despise outward things

All that is in the world is vanity except to love God and serve Him only. . . .

Study, therefore, to withdraw the love of your soul from all things that are visible and turn to things that are invisible.³²

This language may seem antiquated and extreme, but the same principles, sometimes cast in a more modern and benign vocabulary, still underlie much current teaching and practice of traditional spirituality. The contemporary associate’s manual counsels:

Let them study humility at the Altar remembering that it can be acquired only by accepting and bearing humiliations as sent by the Providence of God. That their life may be hid with Christ in God, let them refrain from all boasting and exaggeration; not speaking of themselves if it can be avoided, even to their own discredit. Let them shun praise, be content to be ignored, to be thought incapable, to be doubted, forgotten, suspected. Let them be ready to rejoice in the gifts of others; to serve and be met with ingratitude; to give love, and then be cast aside; to spend themselves for some great thing, and see the credit given to others; to take the last and lowest place.³³

The co-dependence movement would view this as a system designed to produce the denial of self that lies at the core of co-dependence and to promote co-dependent attitudes of

³⁰ à Kempis, 139, 40.

³¹ à Kempis, 42, 70.

³² à Kempis, 38, 75, 32.

³³ Manual of the Associates of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity, 24-25.

shame, self-hatred, distrust of self and others, repression of emotions, perfectionism, powerlessness, alienation from the body, and external locus of control. As Alice Miller points out, the traditional emphasis on obedience to authority, passive acceptance of suffering, and violent imagery encourage domestic and institutional violence that is dangerous to individuals, society, and the environment.³⁴

The writings of Jeremy Taylor and à Kempis are directed to men. The messages of self-hatred, self-denial, and glorification of suffering are even stronger for women who already have been socially conditioned to attitudes of inferiority, passivity, and shame about their bodies and whose culturally defined roles still emphasize selfless caregiving and identity and self worth through relationships with others. Both co-dependence theory and feminist theology would recognize traditional spirituality as oppressive, promoting individual and social dysfunction and reinforcing sexist oppression by legitimizing patriarchal beliefs and encouraging women to internalize attitudes and behaviors that ensure their complicity with that oppression.

The recovery movement approaches the process of spiritual formation with very different goals and assumptions. Recovery itself is seen as a spiritual process with the goal of healing of relationships with the self, others, and God. This is achieved by discovering and reaffirming the true self, working through past traumas, and learning new attitudes and behaviors. Many authors recommend membership in a self-help group and the twelve steps of a recovery program as important tools in this process.³⁵

A major focus of the process is on the discovery and affirmation of the self. Often

³⁴ See Miller, *For Your Own Good*.

³⁵ The twelve steps of CoDA include: "1) We admitted we were powerless over others—that our lives had become unmanageable. 2) Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God. 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7) Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other co-dependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." *Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous*, 4.

this self is imaged as an inner child or children, who have been wounded in childhood and are healed through healthy nurturing and reparenting.

From my own clinical experience, it has become clear that in order to heal an abusive past, we need to work with each inner child individually. . . . By doing this work, we can begin to have compassion for our inner children and to develop new skills, integrate lost feelings, and manifest new behaviors that will empower us to move on to the next stage of development. Eventually, we can become the loving and gentle, yet firm parents that we did not have as children.³⁶

Connection with the true self takes place in any situation where one's feelings, ideas, and experience are recognized, expressed, validated, and affirmed. This may happen in therapy or in self-help groups and serves not only to affirm the individual and build trust in the self and others, but to form the foundation for changes in behavior and attitudes.

Although there is little explicit discussion of the importance of experience as such in the co-dependence literature, it is difficult to overestimate its importance in the recovery process.³⁷ The experience of participating in a recovery group, with its modeling of healthy relationships in a safe, honest, and supportive environment, is seen as an important corrective for previous dysfunctional experiences, and such groups are often referred to as "intentional families."

Speaking the truth of one's experience is an important tool in recovery, both validating and universalizing individual experience. People grow spiritually as they engage their own experiential reality, past and present, and validate and connect with the experience of others.³⁸ Suffering and pain are no longer endured as shameful private secrets, but are spoken, named, and reframed as consequences of the oppression of others, rather than individual failure. Working through the pain and dysfunction caused by this oppression is a major focus of the process. As individuals face and feel their pain they are able to release

³⁶Rokelle Lerner, forward to The Inner Child Workbook by Cathryn Taylor, ix-x. Other popular books in this area include John Bradshaw, Homecoming; and Charles L. Whitfield, Healing the Child Within (Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications, 1987).

³⁷ The following discussion of the recovery process is based on books by Beattie, Kellogg, Schaefer, and Whitfield, numerous unpublished materials gathered at self-help meetings and conferences, a variety of speakers, my experience, and the personal experience reported by others.

³⁸ It is interesting that authors of popular books on co-dependence almost always include their stories and the stories of others, often as the starting point for their discussions, in a process not unlike the testimonials of some Christian churches.

it and move on.

An important part of the recovery process focuses on the recognition, experiencing, and channeling of emotions, which have often been denied and repressed. This is especially important for survivors of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, who often confuse pain and love. In this process fear and shame are released, losses are grieved, and love and anger are expressed in ways that bring healing and life rather than destruction of the self and others.

This breaking of silence, with the naming, sharing and honoring of experience, empowers the individual and the group.³⁹ As this happens the locus of authority is internalized, moving from external references to internal evaluation based on the processed experience of the individual. As individuals assume control and responsibility for their own attitudes and behavior, external sources are used for reality checks only.⁴⁰ In this process there is no false dichotomy between individual and group, as individual experience, shared and validated in community, leads to individual empowerment and responsibility, including mutual responsibility within the community.

Paradoxically, individuals are further empowered as they let go of their attempts to control themselves and others and assume realistic responsibility for those things they can influence. Recovery attitudes toward control and responsibility are perhaps best summarized in the omnipresent Serenity Prayer: "God, Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference."⁴¹

³⁹ Perhaps one of the reasons for the growth of the recovery movement is the empowerment that has occurred as co-dependence has been named, described, and shared publically through books, tapes, TV, and conferences. As the silence is broken individuals are able to name and reframe their own experience.

⁴⁰ Theory building in the co-dependence field also is based in experience, with authors moving from their personal experience, to the experience of others, to descriptions of the condition and suggestions for the recovery process, and finally to theories about causation and discussions of social and ecological implications. Perhaps this experientially based process is one reason the professional and academic community is suspicious of its findings.

⁴¹ Reinhold Niebuhr quoted in Booth, *Spirituality and Recovery*, 90. The empowering aspects of this process are missed by critics who feel it encourages passivity or accuse the co-dependence movement of blaming women and labeling them as sick and "depoliticizing feminism by co-opting women's pain and anger." (Sociologist Bette Tallen quoted in Kathleen Hendrix, "When Women Turn to Matters of the Mind," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 April 1992: E1.)

As the process continues, individuals begin to internalize a sense of identity and self-worth and are able to move into relationships that are free from the need to manage or care for others. They begin to be clear about their personal boundaries and their expectations of themselves and others. They no longer need extremes of over involvement or isolation and learn to care for themselves and others in relationships that are mutual and respectful.

Healthy engagement with the physical world is also a goal of recovery. As people deal with their shame they learn to value and respect themselves, appreciate their sensuality, honor the experience of their own bodies, and care for themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. This respectful care is also extended to other people and creation. Terry Kellogg and Marvel Harrison write:

Co-dependency is an issue of planetary existence, survival and health. Co-dependency becomes a destructive force because it involves an absence of self-respect, lack of respect for life, manipulation and denial of consequences. . . . Recovery from co-dependency is the development of identity, the ability to have intimacy and a respect for life, an acceptance and cherishing of vulnerability and fragility, the ability to find strength through vulnerability. *Recovery is interdependence and integration.* Flowing out of these is a respect for creation, a way of seeing behavior in terms of its long-term impact. We learn we can make a difference. We can heal ourselves, our families, relationships and communities. Most important we can heal the planet we live on.⁴²

Ideally, in this model of spiritual formation individuals come into right relationship with themselves, God, other people, and creation as they recognize their problems, recenter their lives through a relationship to God, learn new ways to meet their needs, and resolve their emotional pain.⁴³ Although much of the work is interior it usually takes place within a mutually supportive group setting.

This process is not unlike the process of liberation theology described by Beverly Wildung Harrison which begins with breaking the silence in consciousness-raising groups and then moves to taking specific action to alleviate oppression.⁴⁴ While the method is

⁴² Terry Kellogg and Marvel Harrison, Finding Balance (Deerfield Beach, Fla: Health Communications, 1991), 199-201.

⁴³ See Booth, Spirituality and Recovery; and Philip St. Romain, Freedom from Codependency: A Christian Response (Liguori, Mo.: Liguori, 1991), 48.

⁴⁴ Harrison describes this consciousness-raising process as "collective storytelling," the "naming with others our shared situation," and "re-vision[ing] our reality," (p. 243).

similar, the action phase of the recovery process tends to focus on individual change while feminist liberation theology focuses on “historical socioethical analysis” and social action.⁴⁵

The two need not be mutually exclusive. They share similar values--human liberation, resistance and overcoming oppression, and a commitment to “reciprocal, interdependent social relations . . . stressing mutuality both of responsibility and of control.”⁴⁶

Through the voices of Schaeff, Kellogg and Harrison, and others, the recovery movement is giving increasing attention to the social and global context of oppression, recognizing the role of patriarchal cultural attitudes and social institutions in that process, and voicing a sense of responsibility to the “global community.”⁴⁷ They are beginning to recognize the interrelationship between oppressions, “I have come to know that as I free myself from my addictions, I also free myself from a mechanistic, scientific world view that requires sexism, racism, homophobia, and ageism in all their subtle forms.”⁴⁸ They have yet to apply this understanding to a worldwide context and develop a sense of solidarity with other oppressed groups. This is something the co-dependence movement can learn from liberation theologies. Feminist theology in turn might benefit from the recovery movement’s insights into the relationship between the effects of individual oppression and abuse and social and ecological issues.

Both recognize the creative power of anger, and the danger of seeing themselves “as victims rather than those who have struggled for the gift of life against incredible odds.”⁴⁹ The recovery movement could benefit from the feminist insight that “where there is and has been oppression, there is also, always a history of survival and resistance to oppression that need to be recalled and celebrated for the marks of dignity, courage, and potential it bears.”⁵⁰ Co-dependence recovery has learned to honor survival through remembering, but a sense of celebration and celebratory rituals would add important

⁴⁵ Harrison, 253.

⁴⁶ Harrison, 253.

⁴⁷ Kellogg and Harrison, 201.

⁴⁸ Schaeff, Co-dependence, 4.

⁴⁹ Harrison, 7.

⁵⁰ Harrison, 249.

elements to the process.

The process of recovery shares other values with feminist theology. Both recognize the normative authority of experience. Both are contextual and historical--again with co-dependence concerned primarily with personal and familial history and feminist theology focusing on social and cultural concerns.

Both movements would answer their critics in and out of the church by affirming Harrison's argument that

personal struggle for fulfillment is neither aberrant nor selfish . . . all people . . . have a mandate, rooted in God, to the sort of self-assertion that grounds and confirms our dignity in relationship. Self-assertion is basic to our moral well-being. The human struggle for liberation is precisely the struggle to create the material, spatial, and temporal conditions for all to enjoy centered, self-determined social existence.⁵¹

The recovery movement, with Brock, Heyward, Harrison and other feminist scholars, affirms the centrality and power of human relationships and values those things that create and sustain relationships, including respect, mutuality, caring, honesty, and sensuality. Both combine a clear and unflinching view of reality with hope in the transformative power of love. The recovering co-dependent has experienced "the power of human love to build up dignity and self-respect in each other or to tear each other down" that Harrison describes, and understands her insight that "through acts of love directed to us we become self-respecting and other regarding persons."⁵²

Conclusions

This general overview has identified a number of commonalities as well some differences between co-dependence recovery and the insights of feminist theology. The similarities seem to spring from a common origin as reactions to patriarchal oppression as experienced by contemporary middle class women. This common reference point in women's experience has led to similar assumptions about God and relationships and the use of similar methodologies to raise the consciousness of oppression and seek wholeness and agency, whether for individuals or for social systems. The differences have tended to

⁵¹ Harrison, 240-41.

⁵² Harrison, 12.

be in emphasis and focus, with co-dependency recovery most concerned with individuals and families and feminist theology with theory building and systemic change. This suggests that these two fields might work together, balancing one another and contributing their different skills and insights to the quest of Christian women for a spirituality that reflects their needs and experience.

This would in turn enrich the church, bringing new insights to theology, ethics, spirituality, community building, and pastoral care that could benefit individuals, organizational structures, and the church's prophetic and healing ministries. There are some grounds for Anglican acceptance of such an exploration. The church has responded in some ways to feminist concerns about liturgy and ordination. Individual Episcopal congregations have long been supportive of 12 Step recovery programs. The feminist and recovery movements share Anglican concerns with incarnation and creation, context and experience. And this exploration is congruent with the value Anglicans place on openness to new ideas and responsiveness to social and pastoral issues.

Feminist theology brings skills in intellectual analysis, an understanding of systemic oppression, and concern with world-wide social and ethical issues into this partnership. Co-dependence recovery contributes an understanding of individual oppression and familial dynamics and experience with a healing and empowerment process that is relevant and attractive to a number of women. Miller's understanding of the intimate connection between the healing of individuals and families and the promotion of social and systemic justice can help to integrate these approaches and serve as a warning against false dichotomies between individual and social oppression.

If these two fields can come together, they can celebrate commonalities, recognize differences, and explore ways they might enrich each other and contribute to the spiritual journeys of Christian women. Some of these ways have already been discussed. Other areas that might be explored include basic assumptions about God and human nature, identification of healing elements within traditional Christianity, and formation of healing communities within a Christian context.

Christian women have a need to identify and appropriate new and life giving images

of God. Continuing feminist theological reflection on the nature of God and God human interaction might be broadened to include the experience of women in recovery programs who work and wrestle with the meaning of God in very immediate and personal ways. This would contribute a large data base for theological analysis while at the same time helping women to fit their experience in recovery into a Christian theological framework that is respectful to women and their experience.

Similarly, feminist skills in biblical analysis could be applied to traditional Christian spirituality, using a hermeneutic of suspicion to separate those elements of the tradition that are oppressive from those that are liberating for women. For example, some traditional images, among them crucifixion and resurrection, new birth, and the transformation of suffering, have been interpreted in oppressive ways, but also have been great sources of hope and meaning. Feminist scholarship could help to sort through all this, again listening carefully to the experience of women in recovery, so that women can reclaim those elements that are life giving.

These two fields might also join together to explore new ways of being in community within the Christian church. Both could use their experience to identify dysfunctional systems, large and small, so that women could either seek to change them or withdraw from them to form new communities. New tools could be developed to integrate the experience of the recovery process with the insights of feminist theology. Existing books discussing recovery and Christianity tend to come from a more traditional viewpoint and many women would benefit from a more feminist perspective. The relationship principles learned in recovery and feminist consciousness raising groups--mutuality, equality, interdependence, inclusiveness, safety, respect, speaking the truth, mutual caring, etc.--could become explicit standards for women's groups within the church.

In this process the two fields can remind one another of need for balance between individual and community, with co-dependence recovery reminding feminist Christians of need for clear boundaries and the importance of the interior journey and feminists holding up the of importance of finding God within community and maintaining solidarity with all oppressed peoples. Both can emphasize the interrelationship between individual and

communal wholeness, and the importance of extending this to the world-wide social system and all of creation.

And there is much more. These are times of great promise as well as great danger. The promise will be greater if women from many different fields can come together and support one another in a common search for wholeness. And this search can contribute insights that will benefit the entire church.

CHAPTER 7

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

Many traditional beliefs and practices of the Western Christian church have contributed substantially to the contemporary problem of co-dependency, particularly among women. The church, with its attitudes and values firmly rooted in a patriarchal world view, has been an important vehicle in the transmission and perpetuation of patriarchy in Western society, playing a key role in shaping traditional beliefs about the role of women and socializing them into patterns of attitudes and behaviors now associated with co-dependency. The church's promotion of a hierarchical model of dominant/submissive relationships; teachings about the natural inferiority and subservient status of women; preoccupation with control; exercise of power through coercion and violence; suspicion of sexuality and emotion; and glorification of unquestioning obedience, self negation, sacrificial service, and suffering has contributed to the dysfunctional relationships to self, others, and God now identified as co-dependency. This has caused untold pain, especially to women.

The very recognition of co-dependence as a problem suggests that traditional patriarchal world view may no longer be congruent with the social realities and cultural values of late twentieth-century America. The church must address this issue if it is to be true to its mission of love and justice and survive as a viable institution in the years ahead.

The Past

The historic relationship between patriarchy, co-dependency, and Christianity began when the early church adopted the patriarchy of the surrounding first century Mediterranean culture as the basis for its thought and practice. This view of the world had many characteristics now related to co-dependency: preoccupation with relationships; external referencing for identity, self-worth, feelings, and values; distrust of emotion; fear of change; preoccupation with order and control; and hierarchical social structures that emphasized the virtue of obedience and submission to authority. This was accentuated for

women, who were confined to private, relational roles within the home and family and seen as inferior persons who gained honor through concern for shame, submission to authority, timidity, and passivity. Patriarchal hierarchical social structures seemed necessary for the survival of the early church so they became sacred. When the church accepted this world view as divinely ordained religious sanction was added to social custom. With some modifications this basic first-century patriarchal social system has remained the organizing framework for traditional Christian belief and practice up to the present day.

Augustine gave theological legitimacy to these co-dependency related beliefs and added specifically Christian elements: theological rationale for the virtue of obedience and the innate inferiority of women in the created order, suspicion of sexuality, glorification of suffering and self-sacrifice, emphasis on the reproductive role of marriage, and toleration of abuse as a virtue and duty for Christian women. Augustine, through his interest in introspection and focus on the individual, did begin to move away from the culture's external referencing of male identity. However, women were still embedded in relationships and seen as inferior, passive, non-rational servants of men. They did have a limited option--marriage with the assumption of a submissive, care-giving role in an authoritarian family or virginity which required them to deny their sexuality. Either way women had to submerge a part of themselves in order to survive and maintain some degree of social acceptance.

Aquinas made some additions to this basic patriarchal belief pattern. He added scientific rationale to the previous cultural and theological authority for the inferior social, spiritual, and mental status of women, using Aristotelian biology to argue that women are also inferior physically--incomplete, misbegotten males who play only a passive role in reproduction. While he believed that women could aspire to theological virtues, his opposition to holy orders and teaching roles for women tended to reduce their already limited access to the public sphere. On a more positive note he presented a more unified, less dualistic view of the human person, was less suspicious of sexuality, and broadened the exclusively reproductive function of marriage to include the values of partnership and friendship.

By opposing virginity and replacing the authority the church with that of the family, the continental reformers elevated the status of the patriarchal nuclear family as the basic institution of society and increased its potential for co-dependency related dysfunction. Authoritarian control based on hierarchical social institutions was still seen as essential for survival, but now the nuclear family, rather than the church, became sacred. The family was expected to be the primary socialization agent, creating orderly and obedient citizens for the increasingly powerful secular state. Unquestioning obedience to authority and control of family members through physical violence was emphasized. As the status of the family increased, males as well as females were seen as incomplete without a marriage partner. Family rules and roles were rigidly defined. The suppression of religious orders further narrowed women's options, leaving them with no socially acceptable roles except those of wife and mother and no sources of identity and self-worth except familial relationships.

The Anglicanism that developed in the English reformation continued to accept the hierarchical and patriarchal traditions of church and society. Control and order were important. The idealization of the patriarchal nuclear family continued, but with rigid authoritarianism replaced by a more benign paternalism. Women were still seen inferior, defined by their relationships to men, and expected to be passive, obedient, compliant caregivers. Despite its conservatism, emerging Anglicanism evolved an ethos that was not entirely hostile to change. Perhaps because it was forged as a compromise between many conflicting forces, Anglicanism developed certain habits of thought--a toleration for dissent, an ability to encompass diverse viewpoints, a balanced view of authority, an openness to new ideas, and a tradition of discussion and compromise--that have provided some degree of flexibility and the ability to adapt to changes in church and society.

The Present

For many people in contemporary American society the traditional patriarchal view of the world no longer fits with their experience, no longer seems sacred, and indeed may seem a threat to survival in a post-nuclear age concerned with equality, freedom, and environmental safety. Old hierarchical values are being questioned, traditional views of

women are being redefined as oppressive sexism, and the pain and dysfunction of co-dependence are being recognized and addressed by increasing numbers of women and men. The church has begun to respond, however slowly, to some of these issues.

Despite opposition from traditionalists, various changes have taken place, and many of these are positive from the point of view of co-dependency prevention. Now in the mainstream of American Anglicanism there is a greater likelihood that God's love rather than God's wrath is emphasized, human nature is viewed more positively, marriage is more egalitarian, women and children are seen as individuals in their own right, and new roles are being affirmed for women inside and outside the church.

All these changes have indirectly challenged traditional patriarchal values and assumptions. The major debates that are still raging about liturgical change and the ordination of women (and gay men and lesbians) strike even more directly at fundamental patriarchal assumptions about the nature of God, humans, and basic relational structures. But the church as yet has not dealt openly with the widespread implications of its patriarchal nature and other key issues related to patriarchy have not been addressed. Among these are serious problems related to the co-dependency that permeates contemporary life.

Significance for the Church

Love and Justice

Co-dependency has significance for the church on a number of levels. Most visibly, it presents a problem of human suffering that calls for a compassionate response. At the very least, any church that sees itself as a community of love and healing needs to be sensitive to the pain and dysfunction of its members. And a church that is serious about a mission of outreach and evangelism must be responsive to the very real needs and experiences of people outside the church as well. Less immediately obvious, perhaps, co-dependence theory points to the presence of dysfunction not only in individuals and families, but in the church itself--dysfunction that needs to be addressed if the church is to be a more effective and less abusive organization on all levels of its life from local parishes to international bodies.

Any successful intervention with individuals, families, or institutions requires a clear-eyed examination of the structural roots of co-dependence in unequal power relationships, imposition of dominant group norms and values, and the silencing and devaluation of non-dominant persons. Because the social structures that give rise to co-dependency are based on a patriarchal world view, any meaningful attempts to deal with this oppression must involve recognition and acknowledgment of the oppressive nature of patriarchy itself.

The Anglican church has yet to acknowledge the relationship between co-dependency (and related problems such as sexism, racism, pervasive religious and sexual abuse) and unexamined patriarchal attitudes and practices in church and society. To do so will require facing issues that are very deeply embedded in the life and identity of the church, among them beliefs about the nature of God and humans, the use of language and other symbols, hierarchical organizational structures and the distribution of power as well as all the changes that any real implementation of the affirmed values of freedom, equality, and inclusivity would make in the life and structure of the church.

However difficult, this discussion is vitally important to the life and mission of the church. If the church is to be responsive to the pervasive pain and dysfunction of co-dependence in individuals and families and in its own organizational life, it must be willing to acknowledge the roots of the problem deep in its own patriarchal tradition, and then act responsibly to identify non-oppressive elements of the Christian tradition and use these as a framework for fundamental change in the life and structure of the church. If the basic premise that co-dependence is one result of oppressive and abusive social systems is correct, the church cannot ignore this form of oppression and continue to talk about love, justice, and the worth and dignity of the human person without losing its credibility and moral authority.

A commitment to basic change seems essential if the church is to continue as a functional organization, true to its pastoral and prophetic mission to share the life of Christ in the contemporary world. Otherwise any proclamation of love and justice has a hollow ring. As a recent news magazine notes in a cover story on women in the church:

Given the human-rights preachments that all churches deliver, a good case can be made that accommodations of women's demands is not only just but also essential for the church's well-being. Last week Anglicanism's world leader made just that argument. "We are in danger of not being heard," declared Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, "if women are exercising leadership in every area of our society's life save the ordained priesthood."¹

This applies to other examples of patriarchal oppression such as co-dependency as well. Beverly Wildung Harrison has said, "Religious persons and institutions, like political persons and institutions, are deformed by participation in oppression. They are transformed by incorporating a genuinely moral resistance to oppression."² Certainly the contemporary church is deeply in need of transformation. Its survival may depend upon it.

Influence and Survival

The current widespread interest in co-dependence has other implications for the mission and survival of the church. To be viable, any religious organization, even the most exclusive cult, must maintain a certain level of congruence with the culture around it. The identification of the concept co-dependence points to basic changes in American culture that require a response from the church.

Norms and behaviors that were previously accepted without question by large segments of society are now seen by many as dysfunctional, suggesting that there has been a basic shift in perception and values. The identification of co-dependency as a problem can be seen as one sign of the dislocation that is occurring because a world-view developed in one historical and social situation continues to be applied in a very different cultural context. It would seem that the norms and values of the first century Mediterranean world, as modified and transmitted by the Christian church, no longer apply to life as it is experienced by many people in late twentieth century America.

Unless the church chooses to repudiate values of inclusivity, equality, and self-determination it cannot avoid the incongruence between democratic ideals and its own patriarchal world view. Attempts to perpetuate patriarchy, either through overt action or by

¹ Bonfante, Gibson, and Kamlani, 58.

² Harrison, 260.

denial of the problem and inaction, will lead to value conflicts that will become more and more stressful for the institution and for individuals who remain within the church, as well as making the church increasingly irrelevant for those outside its influence. Either result has serious implications for the health and survival of the church.

For example, a recent newspaper feature includes an analysis of the differences between the religious position of Bill Clinton and Al Gore and that of the conservative religious right, (with its exclusivity, suspicion of modernity, opposition to feminism and gay and lesbian rights, declaration of cultural war, and “bloody-crusader approach to politics” firmly rooted in a patriarchal world view.)³ In discussing the political implications of these differences the author notes:

Clinton and Gore didn’t reject God but simply stood for a God different from the one represented by Robertson, Buchanan and, ultimately, Bush himself. Bush was forced to stand for a fearsome Christian God of judgment and punishment. Clinton offered another familiar Christian vision of God: the God of hope, love and healing. This God appealed to Americans for whom religious tolerance has been a bedrock value since the War of Independence.⁴

This suggests that ethical and theological concepts are still relevant in today’s society. Questions about nature of God and the discrepancy between patriarchal and democratic values have practical import in contemporary America. And these discussions should be no less important in the church than they are in the political arena.

On a still more basic level, the emergence of co-dependence as an issue in the modern world is one signal of a major paradigm shift in Western culture, one part of which is a major challenge to older patriarchal traditions. Historically any such period of change, when the old world view no longer fits and a new paradigm has not yet emerged, is a time of confusion and turmoil. Opposing positions clash as the old way fights for survival and a wide variety of new ideas struggle to be heard. This seems to be true in contemporary

³ Michael D’Antonio, “Bedeviling the GOP,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, 29 November 1992: 34. The same article goes on to note Clinton’s experience as an adult child of an alcoholic, and discusses the ways in which he and Gore “expressed spiritual views that resonate with their own generation in a unique way” combining “aspects of both Christianity and more-modern spirituality” including “self-help, 12-Step spirituality widely popular with people under age 50,” (p. 34). This is another indication of the importance of these concepts in contemporary American society.

⁴ D’Antonio, 34.

American religious and political life.

For example, the news magazine's cover story about the rising importance of women's issues in the church concludes with this observation:

The women's rights crusade increasingly is enmeshed with divisive projects of social, moral, and theological reconstruction. Many devout Christians, multitudes of women among them, cling ever more fervently to the old ways when all that is hallowed seems in danger of eroding. That perhaps explains why conservative churches that defiantly oppose the ascent of women are still thriving. In order to succeed in the long term, the new Christian feminism must not only claim power and authority for women but also demonstrate that gender equality enhances the church's spiritual and moral strength.⁵

Any time of change is filled with both danger and opportunity. In the current clash of viewpoints and values the Anglican church has tended to deal with controversial issues one at a time, analyzing them largely from a political perspective, supplemented with occasional (and often superficial) theological and sociological discussion. This methodology does not seem adequate to meet the challenges ahead. Conceptualization of issues as components of the broader concept of paradigm shift might provide a more useful framework for understanding and responding to the deep and interconnected forces at work in contemporary church and society.

The church must be very clear about its message if it wishes to have a voice in the contemporary debate and a role in shaping the beliefs and values that will guide American society in the next century. To do this the church must address fundamental questions about the relationship between history and dogma, culture and belief. Once more the church must wrestle with questions as old as Christianity itself, questions that have been encountered each time the church has moved into a new cultural setting, faced new intellectual and scientific ideas, or had to deal with new political, economic, and technological realities: Is the historical nature of Christianity a static or dynamic concept? Should doctrine and practice evolve or remain fixed in time? What should be unchanging in the faith, essential in all times and places and what can be adapted to new conditions? Where is the line between essential beliefs and important but non-essential custom and preference? In short, What is the core identity of the Christian faith?

⁵ Bonfante, Gibson, and Kamlani, 58.

The church has answered this in different ways at different times with differing results. Another recent news story relates how, in 1992, "The Roman Catholic Church has admitted to erring these past 359 years in formally condemning Galileo Galilei for entertaining scientific truths it long denounced as against-the-Scriptures heresy." According to the article, the official Vatican report noted that the church had been "incapable of dissociating faith from an age-old cosmology."⁶ In the seventeenth century the Catholic church's failure to discern between essential truth and culturally dependent beliefs drove a wedge between religion and science and limited the church's influence as Western culture moved from the age of faith into the age of science.

Will the Anglican church make an similar mistake today when it attempts (or fails to attempt) to separate faith from age-old patriarchal beliefs? How it responds to contemporary questions about patriarchy and other related issues has important implications for the future of the church and of the society. In the face of new ideas will the church retreat in fear, entrenching itself in the old and familiar, or will it act responsibly to meet the challenges of a changing world? Will the church be able to separate the indispensable from the non-essential and discard what what is no longer needed? Will it act to reclaim the positive and life-giving elements in its tradition, helping people to function more effectively in the present, while looking ahead to the future with hope and expectation?

If the church is not able to do this, it may well become a fading remnant, clinging to dysfunctional traditions in a world searching for new visions of love, equality, freedom, and community. If the church does act, it can move into the twenty-first century free of old baggage, ready to explore new ways of bringing the good news of hope and new life to a world in need of direction and healing.

God, our sustainer,
You have called out your people into the wilderness
to travel your unknown ways.

⁶ William D. Montalbano, "Earth Moves for Vatican in Galileo Case: Vatican Admits Error in 17th-Century Case," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 November 1992: A1, 8. This article quotes the Pope as saying, "The underlying problems of this case concern both the nature of science and the message of faith. One day we many find ourselves in a similar situation, which will require both sides to have an informed awareness of the field and of the limits of their own competencies." (A8). This would seem to be true in discussions of co-dependency as well.

Make us strong to leave behind false security and comfort,
and give us new hope in our calling;
that the desert may blossom as a rose,
and your promises may be fulfilled in us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.⁷

⁷ Janet Morley, "Collects," Celebrating Women, eds. Janet Morley and Hannah Ward (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1986), 22.

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